

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Palestinian fighter speaks out from INS jail in New Jersey

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Venezuelan workers resist boss 'strike' to overthrow government

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

MIAMI—More than one month into a bosses' strike in Venezuela aimed at overthrowing President Hugo Chávez, production and exports of oil, the country's most important natural resource, remain crippled. Long lines at gas stations have become a daily occurrence throughout the country. The effects of food and medicine shortages are also being felt.

Supporters of the Chávez government, however, now appear to be gaining ground over the proimperialist opposition that is trying to oust him. Workers at refineries have been stepping up their efforts to increase oil production despite the bosses' sabotage.

"The oil tankers are now moving every day at the lake [Maracaibo]," said unionist Yhonny García in a December 31 telephone interview. "Production in Zulía is now at 25 percent of pre-strike levels, a jump over mid-December." García is a member of the Bolivarian Workers Force, a pro-Chávez union federation, in Maracaibo, capital of the western state of Zulía, where much of the country's oil drilling and production is concentrated. His comments were confirmed in other interviews and press reports.

"Oil shipments by the world's no. 5 crude exporter rose in the past week but were held to less than 20 percent of November levels by a four-week strike led by foes of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez," a December 29 Reuters dispatch reported. "Government efforts to break the strike helped boost oil exports to about 520,000 barrels per day (bpd) in the week ending Dec. 29, according to data from state oil firm

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Machinists in Ontario strike to defend union rights

BY PATRICIA O'BEIRNE

FORT ERIE, Ontario—Some 350 Machinists are on strike here against Fleet Industries to defend themselves against the company's attack on seniority rights as they face the threat of layoffs. Fleet, owned by Magellan Aerospace, produces components for fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

"This strike is not about a money issue at all," said Ray Troupe, who has worked at the plant for 23 years. "Fleet wants to be able to lay off guys with 23 years seniority and hire new people with one to three years seniority."

The strikers include 300 production workers, members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 171, and 50 office workers belonging to IAM Local 939. They have been walking the picket line since October 1.

In a near unanimous strike vote in September, workers rejected the company demands to gut seniority rights and replace the plant-wide seniority system with seniority by job classification. The company demanded "complete and unfettered discre-

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N.Y. protesters: 'No to INS registration and arrests'

Immigration cops question, track U.S. residents from 20 nations

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ AND NAOMI CRAINE

NEW YORK—"INS, FBI! No more kidnappings, No more lies," chanted demonstrators on December 27 outside the Federal Building where the regional offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) are located. The action, one of several weekly protests here, was part of demonstrations that have been taking place in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and elsewhere.

The protest of several dozen people was called to oppose new regulations instituted by the Justice Department requiring men over the age of 16 who are U.S. temporary residents hailing from 20 countries—mostly in the Middle East and South Asia, as well as north Korea—to register with the INS. Protests took place in Los Angeles and elsewhere after several hundred people were arrested when they went to the INS offices in that city to comply with a December 16 registration deadline for people born in certain countries.

The next INS registration deadlines for those from the other countries on the list are January 10 and February 21. A January 10 demonstration was called for New York.

The December 27 demonstration here was organized by a coalition of more than 30 local organizations, including several Arab-American and Asian-American community groups, that came together in response to the roundups, jailing, and deportation of hundreds of U.S. residents originally from the Middle East and Asia that

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Acquittal of two U.S. soldiers sparks demonstrations across south Korea



As Washington stepped up its actions and threats against north Korea, students joined a December 29 rally outside the U.S. embassy in Seoul, south Korea, to condemn the acquittal of two U.S. soldiers whose vehicle crushed two schoolgirls to death in June. The incident has fueled opposition to the presence of U.S. troops, and support for Korean reunification. See articles pp. 3, 14.

Calero Midwest tour builds antideportation fight

BY BECKY ELLIS

SAINT PAUL, Minnesota—"Brothers and sisters, let us join together to help Róger by any means necessary to be able to stop his deportation. At the same time, let us promote a national mobilization, with different groups and organizations across the length and breadth of the country, to build a powerful movement and thereby stop all the abuses that have come down so frequently since the events of Sept. 11, 2001."

Miguel Olvera, a meat packer at Dakota Premium in South St. Paul and a leader of a successful union-organizing fight there, was addressing a meeting of 50 people held in Minneapolis December 27. The public event, held at the Resource Center of the Americas,

was called by the Twin Cities Committee to Stop the Deportation of Róger Calero.

"If we are able to stop Róger from being deported, it will be a victory for everyone. To this end, we need to maintain unity and move forward," Olvera added.

The meeting was part of the first stop in a national speaking tour organized by the Róger Calero Defense Committee, which is spearheading a broad, nonpartisan campaign to stop his deportation. After Minnesota, Calero spoke before audiences in Des Moines, Iowa, and then in Chicago, where 111 people, mostly workers, attended a public meeting.

Róger Calero, a *Militant* staff writer and associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a

Spanish-language newsmagazine published in New York, was returning home to the United States on December 3 from a reporting assignment in Guadalajara, Mexico, and Havana, Cuba, when he was arrested by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at Houston Intercontinental Airport. Calero was told he was being denied entry to the United States and carted off to an INS jail in Houston.

Calero was paroled December 13 after the INS district director in Houston was flooded with protest messages. The INS has now set a March 25 hearing for Calero to institute "removal proceedings" against him.

Calero has been a permanent resident of

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Washington, London ready tens of thousands more troops for Mideast

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

As the new year began, Washington poured troops into the Arab-Persian Gulf region in preparation for an invasion of Iraq. The British government is readying tens of thousands of its troops for deployment as well.

By January 7, U.S. troop strength in the region or on the way stood at around 120,000—double the number in the final weeks of 2002. Total forces are projected to rise to 200,000 by the end of February, U.S. officials reported.

Among the ships and planes now en route are a 1,000-bed hospital naval vessel, the USS *Comfort*—headed for the British colonial enclave of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean—and five U.S.-based combat wings.

The aircraft carriers USS *Abraham Lincoln*, *Constellation*, and *Harry S. Truman* are already in the Gulf or within a few days of arriving there. The battle group for the carrier *Theodore Roosevelt* is heading for exercises scheduled to begin January 13 on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. After the 29-day exercise, the *Roosevelt* will become the Atlantic Fleet's "surge carrier," reported the Associated Press, meaning it would "be ready to deploy early to bolster forces in the Middle East" in the event of an "emergency." (See article page 5.)

U.S. forces in Kuwait conducted a desert training exercise a few miles from the border with Iraq in the first week of January. It was the "largest ever held in the Gulf re-

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Imperialists ready thousands more troops for Mideast

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gion,” according to a reporter for the U.S.-financed Voice of America radio station.
Campaigning to rally patriotic sentiment in support of an assault on Iraq, U.S. president Bush appeared before thousands of troops at the Fort Hood Army base in Texas on January 3. He declared, “We are ready. We’re prepared,” and added, “If force becomes necessary, America will act deliberately, America will act decisively, and America will prevail.”
At the same time, the British government is preparing to send 20,000 regular troops and 7,000 reservists to the Gulf, London’s *Daily Telegraph* reported in early January.

UN prepares for 900,000 refugees

The London *Times* reported December 23 that the war planners anticipate the scope of the destruction will be huge. The paper said that United Nations officials are making “secret contingency plans for a war that would halt all Iraqi oil production, ‘seriously degrade’ the country’s electricity system, provoke civil unrest and create 900,000 refugees.”

Correspondent James Bone reported that UN secretary general Kofi Annan “is trying to keep the preparation secret for fear of signaling to Iraq that weapons inspections are futile and a U.S.-led attack is inevitable.” The contingency plans were drafted after the UN Security Council unanimously approved a U.S.-British resolution to resume aggressive “weapons inspections.”

After more than a decade of draconian economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council and administered under the “Oil for Food” program, Bone reported that “the UN estimates that 16 million Iraqis, or 60 percent of the population, are highly dependent on the monthly food basket provided under the program.”

Hinting at U.S. aims of stepping up Iraqi oil production under military guard, an anonymous official told the *New York Times* that Washington “fully expects” to be accused of undermining OPEC, the cartel

through which major producers such as Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Russia agree on the levels of oil production as a way of buttressing the commodity’s world market price.

According to U.S.-drafted plans for an occupation, the invading forces would rule Iraq directly for at least 18 months. “Government elements closely identified with Saddam’s regime...will be eliminated,” read the plan. “Much of the rest of the government will be reformed and kept.”

Among the precedents being examined are the occupations of Germany and Japan following World War II, as well as the U.S. colonial “administration” of the Philippines after the 1898 Spanish-American war. The plan does not mention that hundreds of thousands of working people in that Southeast Asian country were slaughtered by the U.S. occupiers as they rebelled against the new colonial master.

The documents state that the military force would “preserve Iraq as a unitary state, with its territorial integrity intact”—making it clear that Washington will not be sympathetic to the national aspirations by the Kurdish people in the north, who have a long history of struggle for an independent Kurdistan on territory that covers parts of several countries, including Turkey.

Turkey’s position

When the U.S.-led invasion is launched, the Turkish government is preparing to send up to 75,000 troops into northern Iraq to try to block any upsurge in the Kurdish struggle. Ankara has still not responded publicly to U.S. requests for its territory to be used as the staging point for a military push into Iraq over its southeastern border. On January 3 the Turkish foreign minister said he was “wary” about “hosting a large number of foreign troops,” the Associated Press reported. “Such a decision should be taken in the broadest consensus with public, parliament, and non-government organizations,” said Yasar Yakis. Noting the widespread opposition in Turkey to a U.S. invasion of Iraq,



Troops from the Third Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia, prepare for deployment to the Arab-Persian Gulf region in early January.

he added that “it is not clear what can be accepted.”

Nevertheless, Yakis made it clear that his government, which is under considerable U.S. pressure, supports U.S. troop deployments in the Middle East. Washington is “doing the right thing by narrowing the circle around [Iraq] and showing that there is no place to escape,” he said.

On December 25 the Turkish government approved a six-month extension of the U.S. forces’ authorization to use the country’s Incirlik airbase in its patrols and bombing runs in the “no-fly zone” imposed on the northern region of Iraq. Speaking before the parliament, Yakis said, “In this environment, when tension and instability prevail in northern Iraq, continuing the operation is regarded as appropriate and convenient.”

Some 9,000 U.S. military reservists and other troops rotate through Incirlik each year. “The pilots will land on a Tuesday and by Thursday they are flying over Iraq,” said a U.S. officer.

“We’ve been doing this for a while,” said one pilot. “The more we come over here the easier it gets every time. We get real world experience.”

Meanwhile, the government of Saudi Arabia has let U.S. officers know that it will “give us all the cooperation we need” in a war with Iraq, said Gen. John Jumper, the Air Force chief of staff, at the end of December. He and other U.S. commanders have spoken of Saudi officials’ “private assurances” that they can use Saudi airspace and bases.

On December 30 the Saudi deputy defense minister Prince Abdul-Rahman bin Abdul-Aziz denied giving Washington the official go-ahead. “The kingdom’s stance has been clear from the start,” he told the *Okaz* daily. “We have no commitments on any matters toward Iraq.”

Rangel calls for conscription

As the preparations for an imperialist invasion unfold, Democratic congressman Charles Rangel announced that he would present legislation in Congress to reintroduce military conscription. The proposal was couched as one based on “equality” between the poor and “the most privileged.”

In a December 31 op-ed column, Rangel noted that he had “voted against the Congressional resolution giving the president authority to carry out this war.” However, he wrote, “as a combat veteran of the Korean conflict, I believe that if we are going to send our children to war, the governing principle must be that of shared sacrifice.

“Going to war against Iraq will severely strain military resources already burdened by a growing number of obligations,” stated the liberal congressman. “The Pentagon has said that up to 250,000 troops may be mobilized for the invasion of Iraq,” along with a roughly equal number of troops from the National Guard and Reserve. Rangel listed U.S. forces now stationed abroad, including 116,000 in Europe and 90,000 in the Pacific, along with others in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kosova. The troops also include “trainers” in the Philippines, Colombia, Yemen, and elsewhere.

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THE MILITANT

Venezuelan workers resist boss ‘strike’

Hundreds of thousands of workers and farmers continue to oppose attempts by the U.S.-backed opposition to overthrow the government of Venezuela. Read the ‘Militant’ for coverage of the working-class resistance to the bosses’ ‘strike’ and destabilization moves.



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U.S. actions, threats against N. Korea increase

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

“The U.S. should opt for a dialogue with the DPRK, not for war,” stated the KCNA news agency of north Korea on January 7. The statement condemned Washington’s “hostile policy towards the DPRK,” the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Behind the Bush administration’s self-proclaimed strategy of “tailored containment” toward north Korea, the agency said, is a push to “total economic sanctions aimed at isolating and stifling the DPRK.”

Four days earlier Washington had repeated its refusal to enter into negotiations with north Korea, a government it has branded as a member of an “axis of evil”—along with Iran and Iraq—to justify its long-standing policy of aggression.

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) carried out its part of the U.S.-dictated script by threatening to report north Korea to the UN Security Council after two of its “inspectors” were finally expelled from the Yongbyon nuclear site.

In the face of the Bush administration’s refusal to talk, withholding of agreed-on food and fuel shipments, and stepped-up hostile propaganda, Pyongyang reiterated its readiness to defend its territory. Washington “will have to pay a very high price” for any “reckless acts,” it emphasized.

The U.S. military command maintains 37,000 troops in south Korea, along with 40,000 in Japan. The Japanese port of Yokosuka houses the base of the nuclear-armed Seventh Fleet.

Washington stepped up its actions and threats against the workers state after U.S. officials announced in mid-October that north Korea had carried out a program to extract enriched uranium as part of longer-term nuclear weapons research. In the ensuing controversy, the U.S. government halted shipments of oil to north Korea, an action followed by the governments of Japan and south Korea. The shipments were part of the 1994 Agreed Framework, under which the three governments also promised

to assist in the construction of nuclear power reactors. In exchange, Pyongyang agreed to freeze its nuclear weapons programs.

Seizure of north Korean ship

The dispute escalated further in early December after the Spanish and German navies intercepted a north Korean merchant ship in the Indian Ocean and handed it over to U.S. officers—an incident Pyongyang described as an act of “piracy” in the January 7 statement. The vessel was released at the insistence of Yemen, which had legally contracted to buy the cargo of missiles.

Lacking oil to help meet its power needs, the north Korean government announced in December that it would restart a small reactor at the Yongbyon nuclear power facility. Just before Christmas, north Korean officials removed monitoring equipment installed by the IAEA and expelled two of its “inspectors.” On January 7, Mohamed ElBaradei, the agency’s director general, gave the north “one more chance” to readmit the inspec-

tors before referring the matter to the imperialist-dominated UN Security Council.

U.S. officials claim the Yongbyon unit can reprocess enough plutonium to manufacture one nuclear weapon a year. The inflated figure of 50 weapons that U.S. government spokespeople have bandied about would only be credible if two unfinished reactors at the same site were brought online.

U.S. wields food weapon

Washington has also continued to exploit the north’s chronic food shortages, withholding approval of grain shipments that have been requested by relief agencies.

“We’re very concerned,” said a UN World Food Program official. “This is a population that is suffering.” Rebutting the claims of U.S. authorities, another food program official said, “We have relatively good confidence that the food is reaching the people who need it.” The UN has appealed for 512,000 tons of food—80,000 of it on an emergency basis.

Until this winter, Washington had supplied 20 percent to 30 percent of the food shipped under the program. Tokyo cut off food aid last year, while the south Korean regime has also reduced its supplies.

South Korean president Kim Dae Jung—whose government knows it would find itself extremely vulnerable in any military conflict between Washington and north Korea—has publicly differed with the U.S. diplomatic freeze and “tailored containment” policy. “Pressure and isolation have never been successful,” he said December 30. “We will firmly oppose north Korea’s nuclear arms program, but no matter what, we will pursue a peaceful solution,” he added. “We cannot go to war with north Korea.”

In posturing as a critic of the Bush administration’s focus on waging war against Iraq, Democratic politician Warren Christopher, who served as secretary of state under the Clinton administration, argued for an even more aggressive stance against north Korea. In a December 31 column in the *New York Times* he wrote, “Not only is North Korea much further along than Iraq in building nuclear weapons but, by virtue of its longer-range missiles, it has a greater delivery capability.... We must recognize that the effort of removing [Saddam Hussein] right now may well distract us from dealing with graver threats.”

Supporting the White House’s course, conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer, wrote in a January 3 column that “unlike Iraq, [north Korea] has a serious army, a million strong and possessing thousands of artillery tubes...that can reach—and reduce—Seoul.... So the administration has chosen a strategy of economic and diplomatic isolation. The idea is to squeeze the North Korean regime to the point where it can no longer function.”

North Korea’s ambassador to China said on January 3, “The Bush administration is now talking about dialogue, that they have no intention of attacking the DPRK—but who can believe these words?”

South Korea: acquittal of U.S. GIs fuels outrage

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Brewing anger among working people and youth in south Korea over the continued presence of U.S. troops, their brutality, and their immunity from Korean law boiled over in late November. The acquittal by a U.S. military court of two soldiers—charged with negligent homicide when their vehicle fatally crushed two schoolgirls—has sparked protest rallies, marches, and other widespread expressions of outrage.

The anger at the U.S. government has reinforced the already deep popular sentiment in favor of reunification of Korea, whose partition for the past half century has been imposed by the tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed on the Korean peninsula.

Politicians in Seoul, reminded daily of the unpopularity of the U.S. presence and the widespread opposition to threats of U.S. military intervention, have publicly taken some distance from the Bush administration’s policy of “tailored containment” toward the workers state in north Korea.

The two girls were killed June 13 by a 50-ton mine-clearing vehicle involved in military exercises near the De-Militarized Zone that divides north from south. The great majority of the 37,000 U.S. soldiers in south Korea are stationed near the zone. Rapes, murders, and other crimes against Koreans perpetrated by U.S. troops have been the focus of past protests. Demonstrations, both at the time of the killings and now, have called for the scrapping of the State of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which places the U.S. troops beyond the reach of Korean authorities.

While some demonstrations were organized at the time of the deaths, the soldiers’ exoneration sparked much wider protests in the capital city of Seoul as well as Pusan, Kwangju and other south Korean cities. The outrage has found many different forms, from restaurant owners in Seoul who posted signs barring soldiers from their tables, to students who broke into an army camp on the outskirts of the city.

The government of President Kim Dae Jung was unprepared for the groundswell. The day before the announcement of the verdict a presidential security secretary dismissed demonstrators as “a small group of radical people.”

‘Wellspring of resentment’

Even the U.S. capitalist media, which often dismisses south Korean protesters as wild-eyed extremists, has reported a little bit of the real sentiments of millions, many of whom increasingly see Washington, not north Korea, as their biggest threat. *New York Times* correspondent Howard French reported December 23 that “the protests have revealed a deep wellspring of resentment of the large United States military presence here and of what many South Koreans feel is their relegation to the role of barely listened-to junior partner.

“At the same time,” he acknowledged, “feelings toward North Korea have softened.”

Thousands of people rallied in downtown Seoul on New Year’s Eve, where more than 10,000 cops blocked the marchers’ planned route to the U.S. embassy. Min Keong-min, joining the rally with his two daughters, told a Reuters reporter that he was skeptical about Washington’s claims that north Ko-



December 19 protest in Seoul demanding revision of State of Forces Agreement. Under the accord, U.S. troops have immunity from prosecution by Korean authorities.

rea has stockpiled nuclear weapons. “If they do,” he said, “I don’t think north Korea is going to aim them at south Korea. The north probably built them to protect itself from the United States.”

Choi Hee-byong, one of the organizers of the Seoul protest, told the *Korea Times* that participants were demanding “a direct apology from the United States and a revision of the legal code governing U.S. troops here.”

On the eve of the December 31 protest the south Korean government and the U.S. command scrambled to cosmetically amend the code, giving south Korean authorities an increased role in investigating abuses.

When it was first imposed in 1966, the SOFA gave U.S. soldiers virtually complete immunity from prosecution by Korean authorities. Two years ago Seoul was given

jurisdiction over cases involving murder and rape charges against U.S. military personnel. The increased powers do not extend, however, to soldiers on official duties.

Opposing candidates in the recent presidential elections in the south called for the agreement’s revision, including the representative of the Grand National Party, which presented itself as closer to Washington in the campaign. It was Roh Moo Hyun, however—the candidate of Kim Dae Jung’s Millennium Democratic Party—who benefited electorally from the changed situation. Roh picked up support both through his declarations of sympathy for the protests and his pledges to continue Kim’s policy of negotiations with the government in the north. At the same time, he called for “self-restraint” on the part of the protesters.

Congress ends jobless benefits for 800,000

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Hundreds of thousands of working people begin the new year with a rocky start, with their federal unemployment benefits having ended three days after Christmas. Members of Congress left town in late November to enjoy the holiday season after refusing to extend temporary federal jobless compensation that expired in December, causing more than 800,000 workers to lose their benefits.

“It couldn’t have come at a worse time,” said William Woods, who was laid off in October from his job at a candy factory in Harvey, Illinois, after 25 years. “It puts a lot of people that I was talking with earlier under the gun,” he told reporters interviewing people at the unemployment office in the largely Black working-class suburb of Chicago.

Laid-off workers are normally entitled to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits from state governments. During economic downturns the federal government has routinely extended benefits to those who remain jobless beyond that period. Last March Congress passed legislation providing a maximum of 13 weeks of federally funded benefits to workers who exhausted their state-funded jobless compensation. The legisla-

tion, called the Temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) program, expired December 28.

Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives and Senate had drafted different versions of an extension of benefits. But after failing to come to an agreement they simply adjourned in late November and went home leaving \$24 billion unspent that had been allocated for benefits. As a result, workers whose benefits have run out will not receive any unemployment checks until after Congress reconvenes January 7 and then considers approving an extension.

According to a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, some 820,000 workers stopped receiving federal unemployment checks December 28. They joined another 1.4 million jobless workers who have been cut off from federal unemployment benefits since September. After December 28, some 95,000 more workers will run out of regular state benefits each succeeding week. By March 2003 an estimated 3.1 million workers will have exhausted their jobless benefits unless Congress extends its expired legislation.

“The [Congressional] debate over benefit extensions comes...when long-term unem-

ployment is at a 10-year high, one in five jobless workers has been out work for six months or more, and the number of people dependent on the extended benefits program is rising sharply as more and more people reach their cutoff date,” reported Paul Solman, business correspondent for PBS TV’s Online Newshour.

Part of the reason more workers have been running out of jobless benefits more rapidly than in the past is that the TEUC program approved by Congress last year was much shorter—only 13 weeks in most states—than the congressional program created during the previous recession.

The official U.S. unemployment rate reached 6 percent in November—about 8.5 million jobless workers, the highest number since mid-1994.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2 million factory jobs have been eliminated over the past two years; manufacturing employment, now at 16.5 million, is at the lowest level in 40 years.

In November alone, more than 2,000 mass layoffs took place, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); mass layoffs are defined as actions involving at least 50 workers from a single establishment.

Detroit resident freed as gov’t ‘antiterror’ frame-up unravels

BY PETER THIERJUNG

DETROIT—Mohamed Alajji, a local resident, was freed here December 27 after being jailed by federal authorities for more than a week on trumped-up charges. Following a “probable cause” hearing, U.S. Magistrate Steven Pepe ruled that federal prosecutors did not have sufficient grounds to continue to hold Alajji or to pursue charges of Social Security fraud against him. The government used the fraud charges to keep him in jail while fishing for a way to prosecute him on charges related to “terrorism”—a tactic it has used to jail hundreds of people over the past year.

Alajji, a truck driver, was arrested December 19. Federal cops said they had received “tips” from an estranged brother-in-law and unnamed informers that Alajji was planning a terrorist attack in Michigan. The brother-in-law later “recanted” his claims, authorities said.

While the government jailed him saying they were investigating his alleged ties to “terrorism,” prosecutors presented no evidence for such charges. They then attempted to pin Social Security fraud charges on Alajji by saying the Yemen-born man applied for two Social Security cards in 1995 and a duplicate card in 1999, using slightly different spellings of his last name.

At the preliminary hearing, federal prosecutors attempted to paint the defendant as a scheming criminal intent on defrauding the government by obtaining benefits he was not eligible for or by selling one of the cards on the black market. No evidence of fraud or intent to commit fraud was presented, however, even though the standard of proof commonly used in preliminary hearings of this kind is very low. U.S. officials were surprised the judge threw out the case because federal judges usually rule in favor of prosecutors in such preliminary exams.

In his ruling, Judge Pepe said it would be impossible to expect even a lifelong U.S. citizen to navigate the complex Social Security law. He ruled that no grounds existed to bring charges against Alajji and ordered his immediate release.

Government officials and the big-business media branded Alajji as holding “anti-American” and “radical Islamic” views.

“Even assuming he [Alajji] adheres to the most radical beliefs, it seems to me in this nation that citizens or aliens are able to speak their beliefs freely unless those beliefs could incite some action of significant harm,” Pepe ruled.

Prosecutors are now reportedly considering convening a grand jury to bring indictments against Alajji.

Frame-up methods

The Alajji case exposed some of the methods the FBI and other federal police have used in “terrorism” frame-up campaigns. The December 24 *Detroit News* reported that a “confidential informant” had told federal

cops Alajji had attended a “conference” prior to Sept. 11, 2001, at an “unknown” location and brought back audio tapes titled “Jihad against America.” According to court documents, the snitch told government investigators that Alajji considered Christians and Jews “despicable unbelievers.”

After a cop raid of Alajji’s house, a government spokesman said federal agents had found “numerous documents” and “literally thousands of audio tapes, which appear to be in Arabic, of discussions which concern topics mainly discussed and supported by those who are adherents to more extremist sects of Islam.”

In an affidavit presented to the court, the government asserted that “Alajji and four other Yemeni males would gather on Saturdays to listen to the tapes and discuss their hatred of America. Their complaints focused around the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia.”

FBI agents interrogated Alajji on Oct. 4, 2001, but neither arrested him nor charged him with any crime. A few weeks after Sept. 11, 2001, Alajji had quit a job of three years at an auto-parts factory near Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was alleged to have told coworkers, “I need to go to my country.” In face of intense government harassment of the large Arab community here in Detroit and neighboring Dearborn following the World Trade Center attacks, as well as a rise

‘Money laundering’ raids target Arab immigrants

BY PETER THIERJUNG

DETROIT—The highly publicized arrest and attempted prosecution of Mohamed Alajji (see accompanying article) occurred simultaneously with multiple raids and arrests of six residents of Detroit and nearby Dearborn by U.S. customs agents here.

The raids were part of a national police sting operation named “Operation Green Quest” that has targeted the Detroit area and Toledo, Ohio, among other cities. Police say that since October 2001 they have made 61 arrests, brought 43 indictments, and seized more than \$8 million, in addition to \$22 million in “monetary instruments” such as checks.

One of the ways the U.S. government has rounded up individuals it has associated with “terrorism” has been through accusations of money laundering, using provisions in the 2001 USA Patriot Act that give police wider powers to make arrests on such a basis.

Some 60 cops, including from the Joint Terrorism Task Force, have carried out the raids here, confiscating records, computers, and cell phones, as well as \$200,000 from five bank accounts.

Federal prosecutors claim those arrested had illegally transferred money to Yemen, stopping short of charging that the transfers were connected with “terrorism.” But sen-

Pakistan: thousands protest U.S. war moves



Some 12,000 people rallied in cities across Pakistan January 3 protesting U.S. war moves against Iraq and Washington’s military incursions in their country. The protests were sparked by a December 29 U.S. air strike that dropped a 500-pound bomb near the border with Afghanistan, killing two Pakistani citizens.

in acts of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab bigotry, it was not uncommon for immigrants there to consider returning to their country of origin.

Another claim used by the cops to paint Alajji as a dangerous individual was the report that after he quit, a coworker told police she found a drawing of the World Trade

Center attack near his workstation. Alajji denied making the drawing.

During the hearing, the courtroom was filled with family members and supporters of Alajji. He was supported by Michigan’s American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and represented by the committee’s counsel, Nabih Ayad.

sational media reports and statements by government officials insinuate vague connections between the money and “terrorist” activity. “We don’t know if some of the money transferred, all or any of the money was used to fund terrorism. We don’t know and that’s the problem,” said Richard Hoglund, a special agent for the Customs’ Office of Investigations.

A restaurant, gas station, dollar store, and a delivery agency were among the businesses raided, as well as some residences. The December 19 *Detroit News* printed a map showing the locations and addresses of the raids. The names of those arrested were highlighted and accompanied photos of the raids.

The USA Patriot Act, passed in October 2001 after Washington sharply stepped up its war drive, requires money transfer agencies to register with the U.S. Treasury Department. In that context, U.S. Customs officials have argued that *hawala*, a centuries-old practice based on trust that is used among individuals in many Middle Eastern countries to exchange money, is suspect. Government officials say they are justified in carrying out their “money laundering” raids because no banking documentation is created and no money crosses international borders in hawala arrangements.

“Without records, we can’t know if the money is going to legitimate purposes or if

it is going to fund terrorism,” Hoglund asserted. “It’s not by accident that we’re looking at Yemen.” Workers of Yemeni origin, who started settling in this area a century ago, are concentrated in a working-class district around Ford Motor Co.’s huge River Rouge auto manufacturing complex, where many of them have found employment at different times. The district straddles Detroit and the neighboring suburb of Dearborn, which has a large Arab-American population. Like workers born in other countries such as Mexico, immigrants from Yemen regularly send remittances to families in Yemen who depend on the financial support.

Many workers of Yemeni origin here sharply criticized the police raids over the money transfers. “That this has anything to do with terrorism is a complete lie,” said a young worker at a meatpacking plant here. “We take care of our families—the money is for them to be able to make it. Yemen is a very poor country.”

“What is the connection of Yemeni immigrants working at the Ford Motor Co., the Rouge plant, to al-Qaeda?” attorney Ali Dagher told the *Detroit News*, challenging the assertions of ties to “terrorism.” He criticized “the government’s scorched-earth policy to harass people in abject poverty who are trying to send a few dollars home to their families.”

Unionists strike against concessions at Domino Sugar plant in Baltimore

BY KEN MORGAN

BALTIMORE—Some 330 workers belonging to United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 392 have been on strike against Domino Sugar since December 8. American Sugar Refining Co., which owns Domino, is the largest dealer of refined sugar in the United States.

Strikers and their supporters are walking the picket line, slowing down trucks rolling in and out of the main gate. Despite three company-hired camera operators continuously recording the pickets and a city cop stationed at the plant gate to keep traffic flowing, “They cannot intimidate us,” unionist Joe Collins stated.

“They figured we wouldn’t go on strike. But they are taking away too much,” said Bob Swiger, who was walking the picket line December 20 in front of the main plant

gate in Baltimore.

Workers overwhelmingly rejected company proposals to shift employees’ retirement funds to an unknown company-run pension, according to a December 9 union press release. They also turned down company demands for an increase in the cost of family health insurance along with a drop in the quality of insurance; a cut in holidays, including Veteran’s Day; and a reduction in wages and benefits for all new hires.

A number of workers at Domino are near retirement, and others are concerned about their future, too. “We won’t let Domino destroy our retirement plans like Enron and WorldCom. Workers deserve a secure pension, not an insecure future,” said Alex Hamilton, a 32-year sugar worker and president of UFCW Local 392, quoted in the union press release.

Further reading

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Jack Barnes

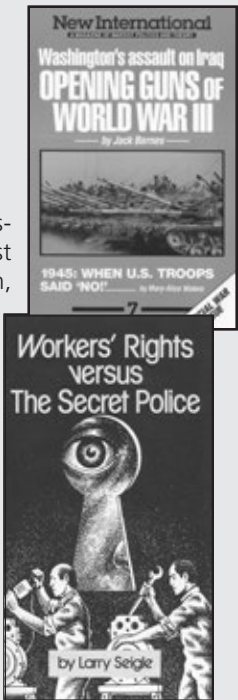
The U.S. government’s murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. \$12.00

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Continued from front page

Fedecámaras, Venezuela's main business association, launched the general strike December 2. It is backed by the officialdom of the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV) and political parties grouped in the opposition coalition Democratic Coordinator.

Chávez, a former military officer, was elected in 1998 with mass popular support at a time when the two traditional capitalist parties that ruled Venezuela for four decades had become discredited among working people and other layers of society devastated by the economic crisis. The dominant sections of the Venezuelan capitalist class, worried about the increased expectations of workers and farmers generated by Chávez's election and some of the measures taken by his government, have sought to overthrow it. The encrusted trade union bureaucracy of the CTV, tied to the traditional capitalist establishment, has joined in the bosses' campaign.

During a December 7 march by 400,000 in Caracas opposing the coup plotters, the president vowed to heed demands to take firm measures against the pro-imperialist opposition.

“This time the government is making good on its promises,” said Enrique Ramos, a leader of Fifth Republic Revolutionary Youth (JVR) in Valencia. He spoke to the *Militant* by phone while in Caracas on New Year’s eve.

On December 11 Venezuela's navy seized

“By the end of December, 10 of 12 tankers grounded by the strike were back in operation with new crews and officers,” said Yhonny García. “Many new employees come from ferry and other merchant marine ships.” García said some 70 percent of the tanker crews joined the opposition stoppage. “Skilled crew members on these tankers used to make \$3,000 per month and officers double that—huge salaries for Venezuela,” he noted.

On December 12 Chávez fired four dissident executives from the oil company's board who are leaders of the employers' strike. The government later dismissed another 90 top managers for participation in the strike. On December 19 the country's Supreme Court ordered an end to the oil strike, backing government efforts to largely militarize production and distribution of oil through the duration of the stoppage.

National Guard troops have been working alongside production workers to restart refineries. Soldiers guard gas stations now and have impounded most gasoline transportation trucks of striking firms, which are driven by replacement drivers in some cases. Two days before Christmas, National Guard troops dispersed a protest in support of the reactionary stoppage by a few dozen people over the bridge on Lake Maracaibo, the only land connection between refineries on the east and west sides of the lake.

According to telephone interviews, some 80 percent of PDVSA's 30,000 production workers remain on the job. The majority of the 10,000 administrative personnel, skilled technicians, and managers are on strike. This contrasts with reports in the big-business media claiming that the large majority of the oil workers are striking.

"I visited El Palito twice in the last two weeks, along with other students," said Joel Pantoja, a student at the University of Carabobo in Valencia, in a December 31 phone interview. El Palito is one of Venezuela's largest refineries. "We saw that the managers had taken computers and damaged computerized controls at the refinery when they left," he said. "This kind of sabotage and the strike by tanker crews and truck firms distributing gasoline brought produc-



Workers at the Puerto La Cruz refinery in Venezuela, who are maintaining 70 percent of oil production in face of bosses' strike aimed at toppling President Hugo Chávez.

tion to a standstill. But we have brought things under control to a degree. Oil workers and troops have put El Palito back in operation. Last week production was up to 25 percent of normal levels. If we continue like this across the country, the opposition will suffer a big defeat in a few weeks."

There are other examples where workers have taken action to restore production.

While most basic industry was operating in December, Venezuela's state-owned steel company had to cut down production early on. "Venezuelan steelmaker Siderúrgica del Orinoco CA, or Sidor, announced [December 12] it is cutting back production because gas supplies needed for operations are down 60% as a result of a nationwide strike," the *Dow Jones Business News* reported that day.

A week later, “Steelworkers in three buses went to an area where sabotage was suspected,” said Yhonny García. “They found natural gas pipelines damaged and valves shut off. They repaired them, with the help of technicians. Now production at Sidor is back up to nearly 100 percent.”

In addition to these measures, the government has begun to import gasoline from Brazil and Trinidad, as well as importing

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

U.S. officials have announced that the Navy will carry out another round of military exercises on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques in January, a few months before it is supposed to end its operations there. The war games, which reportedly include the battle group USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, are scheduled to begin January 13 and last 29 days.

Washington has used Vieques, located

east of Puerto Rico's main island, for Navy training exercises since World War II. Vieques has been used to prepare U.S. military interventions from Grenada and Nicaragua to Yugoslavia and now Iraq. The repeated bombings, as well as the storage of hazardous materials on the island, have had a devastating effect on the residents' livelihoods and health. Fishermen and other local citizens have spearheaded a movement demanding the U.S. military leave Vieques.

Protests mushroomed after a U.S. warplane dropped “inert” bombs that killed a civilian guard in Vieques in 1999. In face of sustained protests, U.S. and Puerto Rican colonial officials signed an agreement in 2000 that the Navy would leave by 2003. The Bush administration has given a verbal pledge that U.S. forces will leave by May but has refused pleas from Puerto Rican officials to put it in writing.

“We are not waiting for the Navy to end its military maneuvers on its own,” said Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, in a phone interview. He reported that there will be protests both on Vieques and the main island, starting January 11, demanding the Navy cease its military moves there and pull out of Vieques for good. Guadalupe stated, “We understand that the Navy keeps saying they will leave, but so far they have never fulfilled their promises.”

Guadalupe reiterated his committee's demands, known as the "four Ds"—demilitarization, decontamination, devolution [of the lands], and sustainable development. "We need to continue the struggle against the military maneuvers," he said, "as part of a broader social struggle" for the land,

flour and other foodstuffs from other countries.

Joel Pantoja reported that imports of flour and other foodstuffs were necessary. "Right in the middle of the holidays, soft drinks, beer, and flour for *arepas* [a popular pitalike bread] have become scarce," he said. "This is because the Grupo Mendoza, which owns Empresas Polar, the second largest capitalist family in the country, is solid for the strike. They have shut down Pepsi Cola plants, Polar beer breweries, and cooking oil factories, which they own."

According to Pantoja and others interviewed the government has countered by aiding small firms producing soft drinks and flour to boost production and is working with small farmers to increase wheat shipments.

Such measures have increased the president's popularity among many working people, especially in the rural areas. "Yes, we don't have gasoline, or at least you have to wait all night to get some, but I blame that on the reactionaries organizing another coup against Chávez," said María Pérez, whose husband farms in the town of San Carlos, Cojedes state. "The president is for the poor and we'll fight to the death those who are trying to bring him down."

The Debate on Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America

by Joseph Hansen

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65th anniversary of founding of the SWP

The first week of January marks the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Socialist Workers Party. The party held its founding convention in Chicago from Dec. 31, 1937, to Jan. 3, 1938.

The founding of the SWP built on 20 years of experience in constructing a party in the United States that could emulate the communist course of the Bolsheviks under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, the party that led millions of workers and farmers to take power in the October 1917 Russian Revolution.

The new organization was led by seasoned communists who had been part of organizing the Communist Party in the United States and who opposed the growing Stalinization of the party leadership and supported the fight led by Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky to continue Lenin's communist course. The Socialist Workers Party incorporated layers of workers and youth newly radicalized by the labor battles of the 1930s.

Coming out of the convention the Socialist Workers Party deepened its orientation to the industrial working class and unions in order to meet the challenges and revolutionary opportunities in the class struggle at home and abroad. Its cadres joined in union battles against the employers, the rising Black rights movement, struggles against colonial rule in Puerto Rico and around the world, the fight against fascism both in Europe and in its incipient forms at home, and the campaign against the imperialist rulers' drive toward war, which had been developing over the previous several years. The SWP defended the Soviet workers state in face of imperialist attack. And it played a key role in the establishment of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded by Trotsky and other veteran communists, although the party was barred from formal membership by reactionary U.S. legislation.

Just a few years after the party's founding, on Dec. 8, 1941, 18 SWP and Teamsters union leaders were sentenced to prison on frame-up charges because of their active opposition within the labor movement to Washington's intervention in the imperialist slaughter of World War II. They were jailed in Sandstone federal penitentiary in Minnesota in 1944-45.

Reprinted below are excerpts from the *Socialist Appeal*, the name of the *Militant* at that time, and the Pathfinder book *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party: Minutes and Resolutions 1938-39*.

The first selection is from a front-page article published in the Jan. 15, 1938, issue of *Socialist Appeal*, under the headlines, "Hail the Socialist Workers Party!" and "Join the Struggle for Socialism!" The second excerpt is from a resolution adopted by the party's founding convention on "The political situation and the tasks of the party," from *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party*. Copyright © 1982 by Pathfinder, reprinted by permission.

To read about the preceding decade in building a proletarian party in the United States, see Pathfinder's *The History of American Trotskyism, 1928-38: Report of a Participant*, by James P. Cannon, a found-



Socialist Appeal

Rally of 1,000 at second convention of Socialist Workers Party, held in New York on June 30, 1939. From left to right on the platform: Vincent Ray Dunne, a leader of the 1934 Teamster strikes in Minneapolis; James P. Cannon, national secretary of the SWP; Reuben Plaskett (standing), delegate from New Jersey; and Genora Johnson, a leader of the Women's Auxiliary during the 1937 sit-down auto strike in Flint, Michigan.

ing leader of the Socialist Workers Party and its first national secretary.



The Chicago convention of the revolutionary socialists has established the American section of the Fourth International.

In forming the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, the convention shaped the indispensable weapon of the working class in its struggle against a powerful and merciless class enemy, the exploiter of labor and oppressor of the people. With only the trade unions at its disposal, the working class is but half-armed. With a revolutionary party at its head, it is invincible.

The anti-labor drive

The Socialist Workers Party could not have been founded at a more crucial moment. The American working class is face to face with a heavy employers' onslaught upon its standard of living, already badly undermined by years of crisis and depression. The only solution that the wisest of the capitalist statesmen, [President Franklin Delano] Roosevelt, has been able to offer to the problem of hunger is to cut down the production of food. Now, with a new depression leading towards an even sharper crisis, the capitalists, whose rule Roosevelt has been bent on preserving, are proceeding to throw new hundreds of thousands out of work and to cut the wages of those whom they continue to employ. The most powerful capitalist nation of the earth has proved incapable of feeding, clothing and housing the masses of the population. The existing social system is bankrupt and awaits only the revolutionary action of the working class to be flung into the discard so as to make

way for the socialist economy of abundance and equality.

Even more menacing than the crisis and the anti-labor drive is the growing threat of war. The crisis condemns millions to hunger and slow starvation. The imperialist war condemns them to speedy death in muddy, blood-soaked trenches—victims of the imperialist lust for expansion and profit.



The capitalist world crisis

The political and economic situation in the United States is developing in the midst of a convulsive evolution of a world capitalist society in a state of crisis and decay—a world crisis with which the United States is inextricably connected and from whose effects it cannot exempt itself by a policy of either economic or political "isolation."

The world bourgeoisie has been able to surmount the violent crisis that shook its whole economic structure beginning with the stock market crash in the United States in 1929. In countries such as Germany, a purely conjunctural improvement has been achieved by a sharp reduction of the standard of living of the masses and by a tremendous increase of operations in the armaments and related industries, resulting in a partial consolidation of the fascist regime. In France, the People's Front movement¹ has been able to survive and to perpetuate its democratic illusions on the basis of a temporary prosperity, or more accurately, of a slowing down of the more violent pace of economic decline which harassed the country a few years ago. England too has been able to arrest a more catastrophic economic fall by virtue of the unprecedented armaments program inaugurated by the government.

None of the big powers, however, can achieve that level of economic stability which was attained, for example, by France after the World War, except by resolving, at least on a capitalist basis, the conflict between its productive forces and the national boundaries and the limitations imposed by its share of the world market. This is especially true of those powers, like Germany, Italy, Japan, and Poland, whose need of economic expansion comes into the sharpest and most immediate conflict with the present divisions of the world market. The present period may be characterized as one in which all the imperialist powers are jockeying for best position, from the standpoint of the advancement of their economic and military (armaments) strength, in preparation for the inevitable struggle for the revision of the world among the big imperialist bandits, i.e., for the second world war.

In this sense, the second world war has already begun. More exactly, the big preliminary skirmishes have already taken place. The conquest of Ethiopia by Italian imperialism² strengthened the latter's position along the lifeline of British imperialism, in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and

northeastern Africa. The mineral wealth and strategical importance of Spain are the object of a duel between Italy-Germany and England-France, the accompanying shadow of the civil war on the peninsula. The invasion of China by Japan only heralds the war in which not only these two countries, but also the Soviet Union, the British empire, and the United States will be inescapably and directly involved as active belligerents.

Position of the SWP

If the working class is unable to prevent the outbreak of war, and the United States enters directly into it, the SWP stands pledged to the traditional position of revolutionary Marxism. It will utilize the crisis of capitalist rule engendered by the war to prosecute the class struggle with the utmost intransigence, to strengthen the independent labor and revolutionary movements, and to bring the war to a close by the revolutionary overturn of capitalism and the establishment of proletarian rule in the form of the workers' state. Combating the chauvinistic wave, it will not only reject any and every form of class collaboration, support of the war and of the capitalist government, but will work toward the defeat of the American capitalist class and its war regime by the proletarian revolution.

The SWP will advocate the continuance of the class struggle during the war regardless of the consequences to the military front of American capitalism; and will try to prepare the masses to utilize the war crisis for the overthrow of U.S. capitalism and the victory of socialism.

Party must be rooted in the unions

We cannot ignore the fact that the past development of the Fourth Internationalist movement in this country has prepared it to meet the great tasks that now face it chiefly in one sense, namely, in that it has provided the party with its thought-out and proven principled foundations. At the same time, it must be recognized that the intensely political and polemical life of the movement in the past, its enforced isolation from the mainstream of the working-class movement, has produced not only certain sectarian tendencies (Oehler, etc.), but also a tendency towards an exclusively internal existence unconnected with the living movement of the working class. It is imperative that this tendency be overcome and that the party turn its full energies towards rooting itself in the labor movement.

The SWP proceeds in its tactics and activities not merely from the standpoint of what it ought to be and must become, but primarily from the realistic consideration of what it is at the present time, what forces are at its disposal, and what tasks it can reasonably accomplish in the coming period. We are not yet a mass party and therefore cannot assume all the responsibilities incumbent upon such a movement. It is only in certain localities—and they are not numerous—that our party has firm contacts with the organized labor movement. For the most part, however, the party still operates as a large propaganda organization. It is necessary to take deliberate measures to pass beyond these confines. The main task of the party in the coming period is not the impossible one of becoming the leader of the American working class; that would be a vain illusion, and would bring both disappointment and disorientation into our midst. Our main task is to entrench ourselves in the labor movement, above all in the trade unions, to gain important bases in the labor movement, to consolidate them, and to proceed from them to our next tasks.

The accomplishment of this simple, prosaic, but indispensable task means a radical improvement of the composition of our party. We will not succeed in rooting the party in the working class, much less to defend the revolutionary proletarian principles of the party from being undermined, unless

Continued on Page 7

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United Airlines drives to squeeze more pay cuts from workers

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

United Airlines has announced demands for “temporary” wage reductions of 13 percent from 37,000 mechanics, and ramp and customer service workers organized by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), as it continues its drive to slash labor costs and restore profitability.

Officials of the 22,000-member flight attendants union have already agreed to place proposals for new pay cuts before their membership. Pilots began voting December 30 on a revised contract that includes a whopping 29 percent salary cut.

The crisis-ridden carrier, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on December 9, says that if it can’t gain agreement for new concessions from its 83,000 employees, it will ask the bankruptcy court to throw out existing union contracts. The company cites its deal with Bank One, J.P. Morgan Chase, and other banks for a \$1.5 billion loan, granted on the proviso that it slash its monthly expenses by February 15.

The bankruptcy court judge said that he will rule by January 10 on whether to permit United to void its contracts. Officials of

the International Association of Machinists have announced plans to file a suit in opposition to the motion.

United employees have only just come out of a previous round of concession demands. In late 2002 the company won agreement from pilots, flight attendants, and ramp and customer service workers to accept cuts ranging from 7 percent to 18 percent on the grounds that it needed \$5.2 billion in concessions over five years in order to receive federal loan guarantees.

Union officials, along with representatives of the pilot’s organization, repeated the bosses’ arguments that the profitability of the company was of overriding concern and should take precedence over union contracts.

In a surprise for the company, on November 27 the 13,000 mechanics and cleaners in the International Association of Machinists (IAM) voted down United’s proposal. Days later the government-appointed Air Transportation Stabilization Board (ATSB) denied the company request for \$1.8 billion in secured loans. The application for Chapter 11 protection quickly followed.

The airline’s bosses are now demanding



Commercial jetliners mothballed at the Mojave Airport in California. United and almost every other major U.S. airline plan to cut capacity in 2003, with more than 1,300 planes from airlines around the world grounded. According to media reports, jets are flying the skies half empty as aircraft values plummet. United and US Airways have filed for bankruptcy, and airline bosses are demanding steep concessions on wages and benefits, to solve their crisis of overcapacity on the backs of workers and their unions.

more than \$12 billion—in cuts over the same period of time—more than twice the original figure. United’s chief financial officer Jack Brace stated December 30 that this round of cuts is “only a piece of the overall package of changes we are looking for.” Other “cost-saving measures” are un-

der discussion, he said.

On January 3 United announced that it would lay off nearly 1,500 management and salaried employees by mid-month. Since September 2001 the carrier has struck more than 20,000 workers from its payroll, a fifth of the workforce.

Meanwhile, union officials at US Airways, which has also sought the shelter of Chapter 11 bankruptcy, have signed on for \$200 million in concessions in addition to the \$840 million already agreed to last summer. Additional concessions and work rule changes have been voted up by pilots. They are now subject to approval by mechanics, baggage handlers, and flight attendants.

U.S. routinely torturing captured prisoners

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. officials routinely practice physical and mental torture of prisoners held at the Bagram air base in U.S.-occupied Afghanistan, the *Washington Post* reported last month. Based on interviews with former intelligence authorities and 10 national security officials, the article shed light on the treatment of the human beings captured in Washington’s “war on terrorism.”

Although no officials allowed their names to be used in the article, they all defended the brutality inflicted on inmates as “just and necessary.” One of them who supervised the capture and transfer of prisoners declared, “If you don’t violate someone’s human rights some of the time, you probably aren’t doing your job.”

According to the *Post*, after prisoners are captured, “take-down teams”—a mix of special forces, FBI agents, CIA case officers and local collaborators—escort them to their place of imprisonment, aiming to disorient and intimidate them on the way. The captives are then “softened up” by military police and special forces troops, who “beat them up and confine them in tiny rooms.”

Inmates who are accused of membership in al Qaeda or the Taliban are held in metal shipping containers at the airbase. Those considered uncooperative are subjected to “stress and duress techniques,” explained intelligence specialists familiar with CIA interrogation methods. The methods include forcing them to stand or kneel for hours with black hoods over their heads or spray-painted goggles covering their eyes; holding them in awkward, painful positions; and depriving them of medical care or sleep with a “24-hour bombardment of lights.”

Two Afghan prisoners died in U.S. custody at the Bagram airbase in December. Initial autopsies concluded that one died of a heart attack and the other of a blocked artery in the lungs.

In other cases, usually involving “lower-



U.S. soldiers take Afghan man with sack over his head to detention center. Washington’s prisoners in Afghanistan are often “softened up” by military police and Special Forces before they are taken to CIA interrogation centers where they are subjected to torture.

level” captives, inmates are transferred into the custody of the “foreign intelligence services” of other governments known for using brutal means to extract information. The interrogators are presented with a CIA-compiled list of questions to get answers to. The article named Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt. The Moroccan regime, for one—which has a “documented history of torture as well as long-standing ties to the CIA”—has sharply increased its cooperation with Washington in the interrogation of these prisoners, the *Post* reported.

These “extraordinary renditions”—the name given such transfers—are done “without recourse to legal process,” noted the big-business paper. In spite of Washington’s official denials of such practices, one official

boasted, “We send them to other countries so *they* can kick the [shit] out of them.” Some regimes are reported to have used sodium pentathol and other mind-altering drugs on prisoners.

“Extraordinary renditions” were used by the administration of William Clinton after the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. For several years his government provided funding for the Egyptian government’s intelligence service, which is notorious for its torture of prisoners.

The article confirms reports published last March in the British *Guardian* revealing that Washington was secretly sending prisoners suspected of al Qaeda connections “to countries where torture during interrogation is legal.” Waving the banner of the “global fight against terrorism,” an unnamed U.S. diplomat declared, “After September 11, these sort of movements have been occurring all the time. It allows us to get information from terrorists in a way we can’t do on U.S. soil.”

Aside from Afghanistan, Washington has overseas interrogation facilities—off limits to lawyers, news reporters, the Red Cross, and others—on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and elsewhere. U.S. officials have stated that almost 3,000 alleged al Qaeda members and their supporters have been arrested worldwide since Sept. 11, 2001. About 625 are incarcerated at the U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and thousands are imprisoned in other countries.

SWP 65th anniversary

Continued from Page 6

the party is an overwhelmingly proletarian party, composed in its decisive majority of workers in the factories, mines, and mills. We cannot blind ourselves to the fact that this is not the case at the present time. The party must therefore steer a deliberate course towards recruiting above all from the factory proletariat, especially those engaged in heavy industry. It is a perilous weakness of our party that it has a very small representation in the mining industry, in steel, in automobile, etc. Our attention must therefore be turned to the most patient and systematic agitational activity in the industries, in the shops themselves. The winning of a thousand factory proletarians to the ranks of the party would be a triumph which would change the whole complexion of the movement and both the nature and effectiveness of its work in the class struggle. What is said about the social composition of the party applies with at least equal force to the organization of the youth, which, precisely because of the decline of youth in industry, has a far too small proportion of proletarian elements in its composition.

No effective work can be done in the trade unions—and consequently no effective work in the class struggle—unless the party is directly connected with these elementary organizations of the working class. This means that the party must not only demand a minimum of activity of all its members, but that it demands of every worker in its ranks immediate adherence to his corresponding trade union, and activity inside of it if he is already a member. The most correct trade union policy in the world has little or no significance if the party is not in a position to apply it where it is meant to be applied.

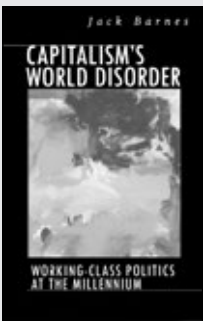
These elementary measures, which are indispensable for the transition from a propaganda group to a mass party in the American working class and its struggle, will, if carried out in an organized, systematic form, enable the party to ward off the danger of being sapped by triflers and dilettantes, by purely literary radicalism, and to become a serious and significant factor in the great struggles and decisive tests that lie ahead on the road to the proletarian revolution.

Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

BY JACK BARNES

“The capitalist rulers offer us social disaster. They offer us depression. They offer us death from curable disease. They offer us war. They offer us fascism. They offer us an unending list of horrors. But we offer ourselves the ability to prevent those horrors from becoming the final reality, the confidence that we can transform that future.”

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Midwest tour builds antideportation fight

Continued from front page

the United States for the past 12 years. To try to deport him to his native Nicaragua, the INS is using a 1988 conviction—when he was a high school student in Los Angeles—on a charge of selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop. Faced with a possible jail term, Calero copped a plea and received a suspended 60-day sentence, three years’ probation, and a \$50 fine.

When Calero applied for permanent residence in 1989, he explicitly included information about his conviction. In granting him resident status, the INS waived the conviction. In 2000 the INS renewed his green card. Today Calero, who is married to a U.S. citizen, lives in Newark, New Jersey.

Prior to starting his job as an editor and staff writer for the New York-based publications, Calero worked as a meat packer in Des Moines, Iowa, and then at the Dakota Premium plant in South St. Paul, where he took part in a ground-breaking fight that succeeded in organizing Local 789 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union there.

It is not surprising that many of Calero’s fellow unionists and former co-workers immediately joined the campaign to defend

his right to live and work in this country. One of the first to send a protest message to the INS was Bill Pearson, president of UFCW Local 789. Dozens of unionists in the plant immediately signed petitions demanding his release from the INS jail and an end to the exclusion proceedings against him. This made the Twin Cities a good place for Calero to kick off his speaking tour.

One of the speakers addressing the December 27 meeting here was Jorge Flores, director of the Immigrant Workers Center, a project of the Resource Center of the Americas. He explained that Calero is like millions who are in this country seeking to improve their lives and that of their families. Flores said he receives calls every day from immigrants who face problems in their workplaces or have to deal with various immigration questions.

Flores told the story of a worker who has been married to a U.S. citizen for 17 years and has three children who are citizens. When he applied for his permanent resi-



Militant/Sandi Sherman

Above, speakers at December 27 event in Minneapolis, from left to right: Róger Calero (standing), Omar Jamal, and Jorge Flores. Left, Miguel Olvera, one of the leaders of the union-organizing drive at Dakota Premium meatpacking plant in South St. Paul.



dency, the INS found he had been in jail for three days when he was young—he had been a passenger in a car that was reported stolen. The charges

had been dropped when the full story showed that the car was reported stolen during a domestic dispute.

The INS, however, sent the worker a letter on a Friday telling him to report for deporta-

tion Monday. He received the letter Tuesday. His troubles were then compounded because he was late for his deportation proceedings. He has had to pay thousands of dollars in INS penalties and lawyers’ fees and is still under threat of deportation.

Fight to defend Somalis

Omar Jamal, executive director of the Somali Justice Center, an organization that defends the rights of Somali immigrants living here, told the audience that he had already been writing letters on behalf of Calero before he knew who he was. He had received information about the defense campaign from an Internet message to an amnesty group he is a member of. Jamal said that thousands of residents of Somalia, especially those living today in refugee camps, are dependent on remittances from their relatives in the United States. He pointed out that the government of Somalia collapsed in 1991, and with it the banking system. In late 2001, federal agents, accusing Somali-run businesses in several U.S. cities of “financing Al Qaeda,” raided and shut down the businesses in the Twin Cities and elsewhere that wired money to the camps.

Jamal reported that as a result of these raids, 40 Somalis remain in prison in Min-

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Calero meets workers, farmers in Iowa

BY EDWIN FRUIT

DES MOINES, Iowa—The second stop in Róger Calero’s speaking tour throughout the Midwest was Iowa, where he spoke to packinghouse workers and others to win broader support for the campaign to stop his deportation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

On the evening of December 29, supporters of the Róger Calero Defense Committee sponsored a public meeting at the Holy Family School in Des Moines. The event was built on a few days’ notice through e-mail, phone calling, and leaflet distribution at a local Latino food store. More than a dozen people came to hear Calero, among them workers originally from Sudan, including one who works at the Swift meatpacking plant in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Calero, a *Militant* staff member and *Perspectiva Mundial* associate editor, described how, on his return from a reporting assignment abroad, he was arrested December 3 by the INS at the Houston airport and jailed for 10 days. He explained that supporters of his right to live and work in the United States, including those in Iowa, had sent faxes and letters of protest to the INS district director in Houston, who paroled him December 13. Calero, a 12-year permanent resident, continues to face exclusion by the INS, which has scheduled a hearing on his case for March 25.

Calero emphasized to the audience that his case was not an exception, but that tens of thousands of U.S. residents were being

subjected to exclusion or deportation based on provisions of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and other reactionary measures.

During the discussion, Larry Ginter, a farmer activist, said the INS attack on Calero’s rights was part of the attacks being waged on civil liberties by the U.S. government, and that “an injury to one was an injury to all.”

Channel 13 TV featured the meeting on its 10:00 p.m. news program that evening as well as the following morning. Calero said on the television broadcast that in fighting

his exclusion and publicizing the case to win wider backing, he and his supporters were also trying to show what can be done to oppose the INS’s broader attacks on the rights of immigrant workers around the country.

The city’s daily newspaper, the *Des Moines Register*, published an article on the meeting in its December 30 issue. In response to the prominent newspaper and TV coverage of the case, a right-wing talk show host on WHO-AM radio focused on Calero’s case the next morning, calling for his exclusion by the INS. Listeners called

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Defense committee holds meeting at new offices

BY NAOMI CRAINE

NEW YORK—The Róger Calero Defense Committee is up and running, with office space, a phone number, and ambitious plans to press ahead in the fight to halt the Immigration and Naturalization Service’s attempt to exclude Calero from the United States, where he has been a permanent resident for the past 12 years. Thirty people from New York and northern New Jersey packed into the defense committee offices for an initial meeting January 5 to discuss the next steps in the fight.

The meeting was chaired by Pamela Vossenas on behalf of the Róger Defense Committee. Vossenas is a national board member of the National Writers Union. John Studer, coordinator of the defense committee, reported that Calero is scheduled for a “hearing in removal proceedings” on March 25 at the immigration court in Houston. Between now and then, supporters of the defense effort have a big job to widen the support for the fight and keep up the pressure on the government to drop the case.

“We don’t have any illusion that this fight will be fast or easy,” Studer said. But the immense interest and response to Calero’s tour in the Midwest shows what’s possible. In Chicago, he reported, 111 people, many of them workers who heard about the case on the news, turned out for a meeting at a church in the mostly Latino community of Pilsen.

New tools are available to get out the word about the case—an updated brochure, petition, and endorser cards. The brochure and petition are now available in English, and the translation to Spanish is un-

der way. The defense committee is looking for volunteers to translate these and other materials into French, Arabic, Urdu, Creole, Chinese, and other languages. The endorser cards can be used to register formal support from individuals and organizations, and includes an invitation to contribute funds.

In addition to winning endorsers and sending letters and petitions demanding the INS drop its deportation effort, the Róger Calero Defense Committee has launched an effort to raise \$50,000 by the end of January. This money is needed to cover legal costs, producing materials, and other expenses. So far about \$13,000 has been contributed. “Raising this kind of money can

seem like a big challenge,” Studer noted. “The key thing is for supporters of the case in each area to sit down together, draw up lists of those who may be interested in the case and able to contribute financially, and start working at it systematically.”

Some of those attending the January 5 meeting here volunteered to come up with lists and make fund-raising calls. Others discussed outreach to supporters of civil liberties, defenders of immigrant rights, unionists, journalists, and others. A special focus of the work in this area is building a tour for Calero the last week in January, which will culminate with a February 1 public meeting at St. Mary’s Church in Harlem.

Support the Róger Calero Defense Committee

- Send messages to INS District Director Hipolito Acosta demanding the exclusion moves against Calero be dropped. Messages can be faxed to (281) 774-5989; or mailed to him at the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, TX 77060. Copies should be sent to the Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; fax (212) 563-0585.
- Sign and distribute petitions demanding the INS drop the exclusion of Calero. A fact sheet and petition are available from the defense committee (e-mail: calerodefenseyahoo.com).
- Funds are urgently needed to meet rapidly mounting legal and other expenses. Defense campaign backers in every city need to raise thousands of dollars for the committee. Organize phone calling for donations, seek honoraria for speaking engagements, and take collections at public meetings. The goal is to raise over \$50,000 by the end of January. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Róger Calero Defense Campaign Tour

The Róger Calero Defense Committee has launched a speaking tour of Calero in cities around the country to broaden the fight to stop his deportation by the INS. Below is the schedule for the first stops of the tour. Requests for additional tour dates can be made to the committee.

Twin Cities Jan. 9–11

Jan. 11: 6:00 p.m. Fund-raiser event at the UFCW Local 789 hall; 266 Hardeman Ave., South St. Paul, Minnesota.

Los Angeles Jan. 12–15

San Francisco Jan. 16–18

Miami Jan. 20–22

Tampa Jan. 20–21

Miami Jan. 22–23

Houston Jan. 24–27

N.Y./New Jersey Jan. 28–Feb. 2

For more information or to send a contribution, contact the Róger Calero De-

fense Committee; Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; tel/fax: (212) 563-0585; e-mail: calerodefense@yahoo.com



Palestinian activist speaks out from INS jail

BY RÓGER CALERO
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK—“This is a struggle not only for me, but for many others who face the same situation,” said Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian activist who faces deportation and has been locked up in an immigration jail with no criminal charges for more than eight months.

In a December 23 phone interview from prison, Abdel-Muhti said the U.S. government’s threat to deport him is part of a nationwide wave of arrests and government harassment of immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia. In his case, government officials have explicitly targeted his political activities as an opponent of Washington’s policies and a defender of the Palestinian struggle for a homeland.

The interview was conducted in Spanish, which the Palestinian activist speaks fluently.

Abdel-Muhti’s supporters are waging a campaign to stop his deportation and to defend his right to stay in this country, where he has lived since the 1970s. He is currently incarcerated at the Passaic County Jail in Paterson, New Jersey, one of the prisons used by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) because of the overflowing of its own jails.

Immigration cops have more than once threatened to deport Abdel-Muhti and turn him over to Israeli police if he does not give them information about other individuals in the United States and in Palestine.

In mid-December an undisclosed number of Palestinians jailed by the INS were deported to Egypt and taken by land to Israeli-occupied Gaza, U.S. Justice Department officials stated. The officials said they had arranged the deportations with the Israeli and Egyptian governments, and expected to secure similar arrangements to deport Palestinians to the occupied West Bank through Jordan. The implicit threat that these Palestinians—especially those who, like Abdel-Muhti, are politically outspoken—will be subject to imprisonment or torture at the hands of Israeli officials is none too subtle.

“They are trying to silence the fight for justice and freedom of the Palestinian people,” said Abdel-Muhti in explaining these U.S. moves.

When the U.S. government accelerated its war drive in the fall of 2001, it initially rounded up some 1,200 people as “terrorism” suspects, mostly U.S. residents born in Middle Eastern or South Asian countries. Because U.S. officials refuse to release names and figures, the number of people of Arab or South Asian origin who remain locked up in INS jails today is not known. Unable to pin any serious charge on them, the INS has kept many locked up on minor charges such as not having their immigration papers in order.

Some of those facing deportation are being held indefinitely because they have not been able to provide all the documents the INS claims it needs to complete the deportation process. They are denied release on parole even though they have lived and worked in the United States for a long time and are in no way a “flight risk.”

Palestinians are among those caught in the immigration cops’ catch-22. Denied national rights by the Israeli regime and internationally, Palestinians often travel with a passport from another country or a United Nations refugee passport. Abdel-Muhti has neither. He was born in Ramallah, on the West Bank, which at the time was under the British Mandate. He has no passport or ID from Israel or from Jordan—or from the Palestinian Authority, since he has been living in the United States for more than 25 years. As a result, Abdel-Muhti says, he is legally a stateless person and cannot be deported to Israel or Jordan.

Locked up more than eight months

The Palestinian activist has now been locked up for more than eight months without a hearing. His lawyers have filed a complaint and a habeas corpus petition—a motion for his release—in U.S. district court in Newark, New Jersey. The motion argues that, under a 2001 Supreme Court ruling barring indefinite detention, INS must either deport or release individuals after holding them for six months.

The INS says it is holding him on the basis of a 1995 deportation order. Although they had not acted for the past seven years, the cops knocked on his door in April of this year.

Abdel-Muhti has been involved in many different political activities in the New York area. He is active in the Palestine Education Committee and the Palestine Aid Society, and has spoken at events in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Earlier this year he had been hosting a regular program on WBAI radio in New York on the struggle of Palestinians in the occupied territories. About three weeks before his arrest, while he was speaking on the radio, a group of INS agents burst into his apartment in Corona, Queens. Bernie McFall, his roommate, reports the cops threatened to throw him out the window of the 14th-floor apartment if he tried to block their search of computer files and phone directories.

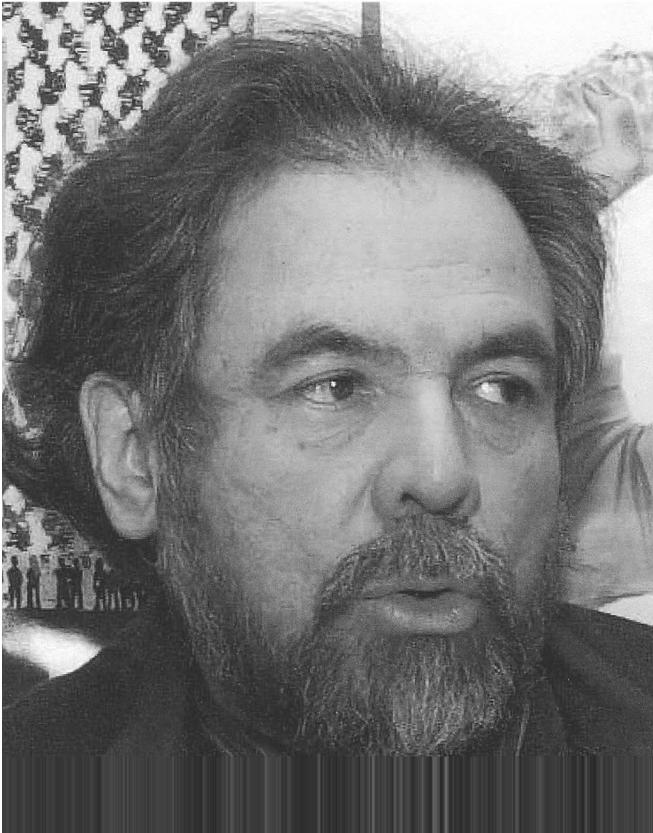
Early in the morning of April 26, INS agents and New York city cops showed up again at the apartment, demanding to question him about September 11. Claiming they believed there were weapons and explosives in the apartment, they threatened to break down the door. Once inside—without a warrant—they arrested him and carted him off to jail. As they left, one of the cops turned to his roommate, McFall, and said, “We’ll get you next.”

Detained at the INS offices at 26 Federal Plaza in Manhattan, Abdel-Muhti was interrogated and threatened with being deported and turned over to the Israeli secret police if he did not give them a list of individuals in the U.S. Arab community and in Palestine.

“You are playing with my dignity and my principles,” he replied in refusing the demand. He was then beaten.

Conditions in INS jails

Since his arrest, Abdel-Muhti, 55, has been moved to three different prisons—the



El Diario La Prensa/Osvaldo Perez
Farouk Abdel-Muhti, who has been locked up for more than eight months in INS jails in New Jersey.

Middlesex, Camden, and Passaic county jails in New Jersey. His supporters say he has been moved because the protests organized outside prison walls on his behalf and his advocacy both of his cause and that of fellow inmates inside the jails are a headache to the authorities.

“The conditions are horrible in the INS prisons,” said Abdel-Muhti in the interview. “When they take prisoners to see the immigration judge, they keep you handcuffed and shackled the whole time until they take you back to the jail,” he said. “You can spend 10–12 hours waiting like that.”

In addition to constant interrogations, prison authorities have sometimes denied proper medical care to Abdel-Muhti, who suffers from high blood pressure and has had chest pains because of the cold temperatures inside the jail.

When *Militant* reporters spoke with the Palestinian activist on December 23, he had just been interviewed by a special agent of the Justice Department’s Office of the Inspector General, investigating an incident his attorneys had reported in which INS cops had threatened Abdel-Muhti with a gun.

The incident happened last July, when the INS was transferring Abdel-Muhti to the Camden County jail. “An INS cop knocked on the window of the car where I was sitting, handcuffed, waiting to be transferred. He pointed a gun at my face, as he laughed and kept the finger on the trigger,” Abdel-Muhti said.

To further harass him, on the way to the Passaic County jail the cops took him to the INS offices at the Newark airport, where he was held for several hours. They later claimed they had mistaken him for somebody else.

In another incident in October, Abdel-Muhti and several other prisoners were taken around to several consulates in Manhattan to try to get them travel documents to facilitate their deportation. They took him to the Honduran consulate, trying to see if they could get him deported to Honduras—where he had lived at one time—but the consulate refused to accept him and he was taken back to the jail.

‘Our voices must be heard’

At the end of the interview, the Palestinian militant put several other inmates briefly on the phone. The jail is a veritable United Nations, with inmates from many countries in the Mideast, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Europe. *Militant* reporters were introduced to three men—immigrants from Lebanon, Pakistan, and Cuba—who had been arrested several months ago. “My brother from Pakistan is under a gag order,” Abdel-Muhti said as he turned over the phone to him. “He can’t tell you his name, but he can tell his story. Once you hear his story, you will realize it is an injustice for him to be here.”

“Our voices must be heard amidst the nationalist flag-waving,” Abdel-Muhti said. He expressed his opposition to the U.S. moves toward war against the people of Iraq, and emphasized, “We are with the people of the United States in their fight against the injustices committed by the U.S. government in this country.”

Abdel-Muhti said he had been following the campaign to prevent the deportation of *Militant* staff writer and *Perspectiva Mundial* associate editor Róger Calero, whose release on parole 10 days earlier—after a flurry of protest messages to the INS—he called “a victory for all of us.”

The Palestinian liberation fighter said that the support his own fight for freedom has gained is important. His fight has become intertwined with that of others facing a simi-

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Ontario Machinists strike to defend union rights

Continued from front page

tion” in deciding which workers will be laid off, rather than basing layoffs on seniority.

The “final offer” that workers rejected called for seniority to be calculated as “length of continuous service since date of last hiring by the company”, in other words, a worker with 35 years seniority would lose all seniority if he or she was laid off and then rehired a few months later.

Nine years ago the union gave back 10 percent in wages, 20 percent in health benefits, a week’s vacation, and a holiday, with a company promise to restore the concessions a year later. The vacation was returned a year later, and 10 percent of the health benefits and the statutory holiday during the 1996 negotiations, but the 10 percent wage cut was never restored. “One manager told us, ‘We lied to you, get over it,’” said Troupe.

Cost of living adjustments (COLA) have been the only real wage increase seen by workers at Fleet over the past ten years. “Now Fleet wants us to give up our COLA for 18 months and they promise they’ll give it back to us, but we don’t believe them,” said Troupe.

Negotiations have restarted with the office workers, but the production workers haven’t yet been offered anything new. At a meeting in early December, Fleet laid out its plans to further reduce the workforce in the plant to 150–250 workers by 2005. Some production is going on in the plant using supervisory and administrative personnel.

Stan Fiske, 64, who has worked there for 36 years, described how a few days before the strike began, a boss called him into the office and encouraged him to take early re-



Militant/Patricia O’Beirne

Two Machinists on the picket line outside Fleet industries in Ontario. Some 350 union members went on strike October 1 to defend seniority rights in face of layoff threats.

irement or a layoff to avoid a strike six months before he is eligible to retire. “I said to him, ‘Are you trying to kick me out the door after 37 years? Take your paper and shove it you-know-where,’” Fiske said.

Bob Weaver, with 23 years service, said, “All of us have been through numerous strikes and this time I think the workers are really going to hold out.” Workers at this plant have long experience in standing up to Fleet. One unionist explained that they “keep putting up the same picket shacks” because there has been a strike every six years or so. The last strike was in 1996.

There have been several strike support events, including a Niagara region strike caravan on November 29, which visited the picket lines of members of the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada on strike against Anagram in St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake, a Steelworkers picket line at Washington Mills in Niagara Falls, the 39 members of the Canadian Auto Workers Union locked out at Ronal Canada in Stevensville, and the Fleet picket line.

Patricia O’Beirne is a member of UNITE in Toronto.

N.Y. protesters say: ‘No to registrations and arrests by INS’

Continued from front page

stepped up since the fall of 2001.

Among the organizers were the Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM), which defends immigrants from South Asia; the Coney Island Avenue Project, based in the large Pakistani community in Brooklyn; the Asian-American Legal Defense and Education Fund; the Korean-American community group Nodutdol; the Committee for the Human Rights of Immigrants; and the Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian activist currently locked up in an INS jail (see article on page 9).

Earlier in the week, the Coney Island Avenue Project initiated a press conference in Brooklyn that became a rally, with about 100 supporters gathered holding signs declaring, “Say no to special registration,” “What’s next, concentration camps?” and “1000s of Muslims detained, tortured, and deported.” The press conference included speakers from more than a dozen immigrant rights groups, churches, and the Pakistani community, among others.

The registration requirement, put in place by Attorney General John Ashcroft in November with little publicity, made national headlines in mid-December when thousands of people took to the streets in Los Angeles to protest the arrests of hundreds of Iranian-Americans and others who showed up to meet the INS deadline. December 16 was the deadline for a certain category of people—men older than 16 from Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, and Libya who have temporary residence status—to show up at INS offices to be photographed, fingerprinted, and interrogated. Many of those arrested were in the process of applying for their green card.

Immigrants from 13 other countries—Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and north Korea—face a registration deadline of January 10.

Pakistani and Saudi nationals are supposed to register by February 21. Citizens of the targeted countries entering the United States are also being registered upon entry and are required to report regularly to the INS during their stay.

Groups file suit over detentions

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Alliance of Iranian Americans, and the Council on American Islamic Relations have filed a class-action lawsuit against Attorney General Ashcroft and the INS, taking issue with the special registration procedures and the arrests. An ADC press release reports that the suit, filed December 24 in a Los Angeles federal court, seeks “an injunction ordering the government not to arrest any additional persons in the ‘special registration’ process without appropriate warrants from federal judges” and “an order preventing the deportation of detainees without due process.”

Some liberal voices have complained

that the problem with the mass arrests of those turning up to register is that they are “counterproductive” to the government’s aims. An editorial in the December 29 *Washington Post*, for example, argued, “Nothing is wrong, in principle,” with fingerprinting and tracking those “who hail from countries with a history of sponsoring terrorism or exporting terrorists.” But arresting large numbers of people who show up to comply with the regulations will discourage people from registering, it stated.

South Asians harrassed in New York

Speakers at both New York actions put the latest INS requirements in the framework of the stepped-up harassment of immigrants over the last year and a half. The Coney Island Avenue Project, established after Sept. 11, 2001, to provide legal help and support to Pakistani and other immigrants facing harassment, explains in its brochure, “In just the ten-block neighborhood at the heart of the community on Coney Island Avenue, it is estimated that 60 to 80 men have been taken from their homes and placed in detention centers in New York and New Jersey. Very often their names are not released, their access to lawyers is uncertain, and their families are left without access to information, to services or to the income that the detained person provided.”

Bobby Khan of the Coney Island Avenue Project noted, “Muslim and South Asian men have been picked up in droves, yet despite long and harsh detentions and subsequent deportations, none have ever been linked to terrorism. Hardworking people...are being denied basic due process rights, thrown into jails with no recourse to courts, and then, after it is discovered that they have nothing to do with violence and terror, are deported anyway.”

Organizers of the press conference celebrated the release that day of Faisal Ulvie, a Pakistani-born man who had received a deportation order after he missed a hearing on his asylum application. Ulvie was already seated on a plane bound for Pakistan when a judge ordered his release on bond.

The registration process, and the humiliation it entails, has struck a nerve among



One of thousands who protested in Los Angeles December 19 against arrest of hundreds who had gone to INS offices to comply with federal order to register. Demonstrations against arrests and registration are taking place weekly in New York City.

immigrants who thought that, by complying with U.S. laws and regulations as they worked toward becoming permanent residents and citizens, they would finally gain some protection and security.

‘An insult’

Some even viewed themselves as supporters of the U.S. government. Dr. Faheem Butt, of the New York chapter of the Pakistani physicians organization EPPNA, denounced the Bush administration at the Brooklyn press conference, saying that the registration requirement for Pakistanis “is directed against staunch supporters of the USA. Pakistan fought in Afghanistan for the USA and what did we get? Instability, drugs, and the war against terrorism. Why us?”

“It’s a big insult! It’s against democracy,” said Mona, an Iranian woman who stopped to show her support for the aims of the picket line at the Federal Building. “We came here for a little bit of democracy, but it doesn’t matter how long you have been here, you are still treated like a foreigner. This is just prejudice, not equality. Since 9/11, we are treated like second-class citizens.”

Speaking at the December 27 picket at the Federal Building Monami Maulik, organizer of DRUM, pointed out that many of those registering have been questioned about their religious practices, and that the men arrested in Los Angeles were “shackled, strip-searched, and some were hosed down with cold water” before being jailed

in overcrowded quarters such as the basement of the INS offices.

John Choe of Nodutdol said, “Koreans suffer discrimination and hardships here and militarization by the United States abroad. The registration is a slap in the face of Koreans in the United States, who helped to build this country. Now Korea has been declared an ‘axis of evil’ by the U.S. government. We say: ‘End the registrations, end racism, deportations, and profiling. End the militarization of Korea.’”

Several speakers referred to the forcible internment of Japanese-Americans that followed a similar registration requirement after Washington declared war on Japan in 1941. Some also expressed their opposition to the developing U.S. war against Iraq.

A member of the Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti appealed for support for the Palestinian activist, who is being held in an INS jail in New Jersey and faces deportation to Egypt or Israel, where his life could be in danger.

Deep, a 17-year old Indian-American, explained why he and his young friends had come to picket the Federal Building. “We are asking people to organize to protest these registrations. We’re here to show we’re against the registrations, and to let others know they’re going on. They are detaining people over anything now. Most people don’t know they have to register, and that if they don’t they could be arrested and deported.”

Treasury Dept. threatens 3 in Seattle over Cuba trip

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

SEATTLE—A broadly attended press conference was held here to protest the U.S. government’s recent threats against a Cuba solidarity activist, a King County council member, and a local church official in relation to a trip to Cuba.

Tom Warner, secretary of the Seattle/Cuba Friendship Committee, received a letter from the U.S. Department of the Treasury in October threatening “civil penalties” and demanding all the information and records he has concerning the U.S.-

Cuba Sister Cities Association Conference held in Cuba last February 17–24. Rob Nichols, a Treasury Department spokesperson, told a reporter for the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* that the department has not yet decided whether to fine Warner. He said the fine could be up to \$55,000. Warner’s crime? Announcing on the Internet the Sister Cities conference.

In addition to Warner, threatening letters were sent to King County council member Dwight Pelz and to Alice Woldt, head of the Church Council of Greater Seattle. Both Pelz and Woldt attended the February conference in Cuba and were licensed to travel there at the time. At the press conference Pelz and Woldt denounced the Treasury Department’s harassment and explained that they had attended the Sister Cities conference with the view of helping to establish a sister relationship between King County and Cuba’s eastern Granma province.

The letter to Warner from the Treasury Department states: “The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) administers a comprehensive trade embargo against Cuba.... The regulations prohibit all unauthorized travel-related transactions with respect to Cuba by persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.”

Referring to the Sister Cities conference, the letter says, “Based upon the enclosed Internet article, it appears that you were involved with the promotion and or possible organization of this conference. OFAC did not issue a specific license to you to organize, arrange, promote, or otherwise facilitate the attendance of persons at the conference in Cuba, nor did OFAC issue a spe-

cific license to you to engage in travel-related transactions in Cuba in connection with the conference.”

Neil Fox from the National Lawyers Guild chaired the press conference and called for everyone to demand that the Treasury Department stop its harassment. He also called for an end to “the Bush administration’s assault on our civil liberties—an assault so far characterized by thousands of incommunicado detentions and expanded domestic spying.”

Tom Warner stated, “What I have been accused of is using the Internet and the web site of the Seattle/Cuba Friendship Committee to ‘organize and promote’ a trip to Cuba without a license.... I am concerned that this assault on the freedom of speech and expression—especially through the Internet—be stanchd before it chills people’s free expression and their ability to respond to objectionable behavior by the government or other powers in authority.”

Lynne Wilson, Warner’s attorney, also spoke at the press conference as did Cindy Domingo representing the National Network on Cuba, Adam Gravley from the American Civil Liberties Union, Christine Rousseau from the King County/Granma Province Sister Association, Ernest Mailhot from the Socialist Workers Party, a representative of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and others.

Several of the speakers tied the threats against those involved in the Sister Cities group here to the broader attacks on immigrant workers who are being detained and deported without being allowed their legal rights to due process.

CUBA and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes

“There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba.”

— Fidel Castro, March 1961

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution is about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. **In English, Spanish, and French.** \$13.00

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New Zealand: Communist League hosts meeting

BY TRUDY GREEN
AND LYNN HARTLEY

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Noting the interested participation in a December 14–15 socialist educational conference here that drew workers and youth from around New Zealand and several other countries, Communist League leader Michael Tucker remarked, “This is the sort of exchange and collaboration that working-class fighters in all countries more and more need and want, and which will increase in the months and years ahead.”

Forty-three people attended the weekend conference hosted by the Communist League and Young Socialists (YS). They came from five countries in the Pacific, including several cities in New Zealand. They included a number of young people, including six high school students interested in the Young Socialists; four of them came after meeting socialists selling revolutionary literature at an antiwar protest in Auckland during the first day of the conference.

Welcoming the participants on behalf of the organizers, Felicity Coggan introduced a number of special guests: Simon Koumac, representing the Kanak Liberation Party (Palika) and Evette Huitema, the Oceania Democratic Assembly (RDO), both from New Caledonia; Christopher Embil, a representative of the Tertiary Socialist Students from Papua New Guinea (PNG); Grant Hawke, a leader of Ngati Whatua, the main Maori tribe in Auckland; members of the Communist League and Young Socialists in Australia, and representatives of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Young Social-

said. The government in Wellington “is part of the weapons inspections that are a ploy for preparing the assault. It is part of the imperialist naval forces raiding vessels on the high seas in the region. And it is preparing to send troops—except it calls these medical and logistical support units, to imply they have some ‘humanitarian’ purpose.”

“The New Zealand rulers will march to war not because they are subservient to Washington or London, or because they are looking for trade deals as a payoff,” Tucker said. “They will march to war in order to advance their own imperialist interests as a class.”

He noted that “Wellington, alongside the Australian government in Canberra, is also preparing for military interventions and wars in neighboring countries. Already we see them using their forces in Bougainville, in the Solomon Islands, and in East Timor, which was their biggest military deployment since the Korean War 50 years ago.”

Tucker pointed to the New Zealand nationalism that shapes the perspectives advanced by liberal, pacifist, and centrist forces calling antiwar actions today, noting that this often takes the form of anti-Americanism or identifying with the rulers’ “war on terrorism.” This “reinforces the patriotic war propaganda,” he said, “not class political clarity and proletarian internationalism.” Communists need to take on these reactionary views and explain the need to build a movement of working people against the capitalist government in Wellington, including for its defeat in wartime. “We are for a revolution of the workers and farmers to overthrow the imperialist rulers,” Tucker said.

“Understanding who ‘we’ are and who ‘they’ are is the starting point of all wisdom,” Tucker responded. “As the imperialists go to war, this becomes vital—to see that we as working people have no interests in common with them, the bosses and their government, but are part of a work-

ing class that is international and has common class interests.” The New Zealand rulers do not act on behalf of working people or to aid the toilers anywhere, he said.

A second feature talk, “The Cuban Revolution; an example for working people,” was presented by National Committee member Janet Roth, a meat-packing worker. “The Cuban revolution demonstrates the tremendous capacities of working people,” she said, and is “an answer to the tendency of working people to underestimate ourselves and what we can accomplish.”

The Cuban Revolution is an example for women fighting against second-class status reinforced by capitalism, she added. “Fundamental advances for women, such as those won in Cuba over the decades since the 1959 revolution, can only occur as working people in their majority act to break the stranglehold of the propertied classes, who are the beneficiaries of the second-class status of women.” Roth pointed to the forthcoming Pathfinder title, *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956–58*, an interview with the highest-ranking woman in Cuba’s revolutionary armed forces today, Teté Puebla.

Resistance by working people

On Saturday evening a Militant Labor Forum on working-class resistance featured communist and young socialist leaders from Australia and the United States. Adrian MacGregor, a member of the Young Socialists and Communist League in Australia, spoke about a recent rally he attended by 3,000 sugar cane farmers in Townsville, Australia, protesting the decline in sugar prices and government plans to deregulate the industry. Many farmers face the prospect of losing their land.

Ron Poulsen, also from the Communist League in Australia, described a growing number of protests against Australian imperialism taking place throughout Asia and the Pacific, from the Philippines, to East Timor, to Indonesia. Fueling many of these protests were recent statements by Australian prime minister John Howard asserting that his government had the right to take “preemptive action” against “terrorism,” a pretext for the Australian rulers’ increased probes toward military intervention in the region.

The final speaker on the panel was Ernie Mailhot, a National Committee member of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. Mailhot pointed to the “important victory won today with the freeing of Róger Calero” on parole. Many of the participants at the conference had been campaigning over the previous week to organize letters and petitions to demand the INS release Calero and drop its moves to deport him.



Militant/Felicity Coggan (above), Baskaran Appu(inset)
Above: Maori march through Kaikohe, New Zealand, in July 2002 to protest proposed prison at nearby Ngawha. Speakers at Communist League conference pointed to expanding openings in the fight against imperialist war, trade union struggles, and the fight against racism directed against Maori and Pacific Islanders. Inset: Annalucia Vermunt, member of the Communist League National Committee, speaks at a panel session.

pect of losing their land.

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Mailhot outlined the next challenges in the fight, noting that the threat of deportation facing Calero, despite having permanent resident status in the United States, is a situation affecting tens of thousands of working people there.

The next day Simon Koumac and Evette Huitema spoke on the independence struggle in New Caledonia. In introducing them, Roth explained that the Young Socialists and Palika had collaborated to build participation in the 2001 world youth festival held in Algiers. In September a team of three Young Socialists representatives from New Zealand, Canada, and the United States had visited New Caledonia to meet fellow fighters and participate in a seminar on the fight against imperialism hosted by Palika.

Struggles in New Caledonia, PNG

“Since the 1853 seizure of New Caledonia by France the Kanak people have been resisting,” said Koumac. During the 1980s the independence struggle against French colonial rule faced fierce repression and many Kanaks were killed. In 1988 and 1998, the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS), a federation of the pro-independence parties, signed agreements with the French government and the main French colonial-settler party in New Caledonia, Rally for Caledonia within the Republic (RPCR). These accords outline a process of increasing autonomy leading to a referendum on independence between 2014 and 2018.

But the National Assembly is dominated by the RPCR, Koumac said, and it is “not respecting the spirit of the accords.” In fact it is trying to exclude the FLNKS from bodies set up under the agreements. This is what underlies a growing political crisis in New Caledonia today and sets the framework in which the struggles of Kanaks unfold.



Militant /Baskaran Appu
Pathfinder book table at socialist educational conference in New Zealand. Participants bought NZ\$250 worth of books.

ists in the United States.

Tucker, a member of the League’s National Committee and a garment worker, presented a feature talk on “Campaigning for Communism; against imperialism, depression and war.” Conference participants applauded enthusiastically when Tucker began by announcing that Róger Calero, associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and a staff writer for the *Militant*, had just been freed from custody by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Houston after a campaign of protest messages from around the world. Coming out of the conference, his supporters continued to win broader support for the ongoing fight to stop the INS from deporting Calero.

“Communists, and all revolutionary and working-class fighters,” Tucker said, “need to act on the understanding that the world we live in is marked by an unfolding economic depression and the march towards a series of imperialist wars, beginning with the impending assault on Iraq.” This brings “disastrous new economic conditions” for working people and “fuels a sharper nationalism that reinforces every reactionary prejudice and trend that capitalism upholds.”

“In New Zealand right now the capitalist business cycle has been going through its strongest upturn in 20 years. But you have to look beyond the business cycle and see the overall trends,” Tucker said, pointing to the long-term economic stagnation and decline that marks capitalism today.

New Zealand imperialism

Tucker noted that as Washington and London have accelerated preparations for war on Iraq, the New Zealand government promotes the image that it is keeping its distance. “But it is already part of the war,” he

Huitema explained that her organization is based among Polynesian immigrants from the islands of Wallis and Futuna, who make up 10 percent of the population of New Caledonia. Wallis and Futuna are also ruled by Paris. She described how in the past immigrants from these islands were largely aligned with the RPCR against the Kanak struggle, but this began to break down in the early 1990s.

We are “fighting for a society that is more egalitarian.” That is why “we support the Kanak people’s demand for restitution of their sovereignty,” Huitema explained. “We advocate a state that is independent, democratic, and multiethnic.”

The conference ended with a panel on “Building a worldwide movement against imperialism.”

Annalucia Vermunt, a National Committee member of the Communist League in New Zealand, pointed to the resistance unfolding among working people today and the “expanding openings to work with others in the fight against imperialism and its wars.” She outlined some of the practical activity that young socialists and communist workers will be engaged in as 2003 gets underway. This includes joining workers’ picket lines and protests for Maori rights; working with others to tour speakers on the Cuban Revolution and other revolutionary struggles; campaigning with the *Militant* and Pathfinder books in working-class districts, at factory gates, and at antiwar actions; and organizing study classes on Marxist writings.

Christopher Embil, a 22-year-old university student in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, spoke about resistance to imperialist domination in that country today. While

Continued on page 14

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1961: Che exposes U.S. ‘Alliance for Progress’

Reprinted below is an excerpt from *Che Guevara Speaks*, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for January. It is taken from Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara’s balance sheet of an August 1961 conference of the Organization of American States (OAS) held in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Guevara headed the Cuban delegation to the conference. The piece was originally published in English in the February 1962 issue of *World Marxist Review*.

The Kennedy administration sought to use the conference to repair U.S. prestige

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

damaged by the failure of Washington’s April 1961 mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, and to stem the spread of revolution to the rest of Latin America. In the hope of accomplishing these goals, the U.S. State Department was presenting its proposed Alliance for Progress to the conference for official ratification. Though U.S. diplomacy was striving to ostracize Cuba, it would be another six months before it would be able to bring about that country’s expulsion from the OAS. Guevara headed the Cuban delegation at the conference. Copyright © 1967, 2000 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

Unable to strangle the revolution, the United States set out to isolate Cuba in order to make short shrift of it later. The Inter-American Economic and Social Conference, held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in

August 1961, was the preparation for this isolation. It aimed to demonstrate clearly that Cuba need not be reckoned with, that it had come only to boycott the conference and, acting “on orders from Moscow,” to prevent the North Americans from granting “generous” loans to the Latin Americans....

The third noteworthy speech was that of [U.S. delegation head] Dillon, who was assigned to announce what was going to be done. His speech was very vague, without a single paragraph of substance.

“If we look forward and examine the external sources of capital—the international credit institutions, European countries, Japan, and the U.S.A., and take into account the likelihood of private and public investments—and if Latin America takes the necessary internal measures, these countries can expect an influx of capital of at least \$20 billion in the next ten years. Most of these investments will come from government sources.”

As one can see, there’s the condition expressed in the sentence, “if Latin America takes the necessary internal measures.” The characteristics of this condition were not clearly explained, so its interpretation rests with the Yankee whim.

Alliance for Progress: imperialist policy

Dillon’s speech expressed, to a certain extent, a new tendency in U.S. policy, one of modifying the system by which the Latin American peoples are exploited, and of shifting its relations away from feudalist forces and toward different sections of the parasitic bourgeoisie. The aim is to lessen internal discontent in each Latin American country by making minor concessions to the people and to sacrifice the most backward sections of society in the interests of the national bourgeoisie, on condition that these countries surrender their interests completely and renounce their own development. This tendency found expression in the so-called Kennedy Plan, which the president himself has given the pompous title of “Alliance for Progress.” It was presented as the latest word in U.S. policy, although in reality it does not represent any change whatsoever in the traditional imperialist essence of this policy.

It cannot be said, however, that this tendency has prevailed completely in U.S. Latin American policy. The U.S. monopolies consider the old method of exploitation the most reliable one. They know it well and don’t find it easy to try “innovations” that pursue the same ends but seek to dress them up in



Workers rally May 29 in Córdoba, Argentina. Guevara explained the different ways that U.S. imperialism maintained its system of exploitation in Latin America.

sheep’s clothing.

It is important to point this out, because the Punta del Este conference has given rise to greater hopes than previous gatherings, and we might believe that this is something new, or the result of a new U.S. policy....

What conclusions can we draw for the future from this conference? We should state that even in the remote event of the \$20 billion promise being kept, the “Alliance for Progress” would use this amount to finance a number of imperialist enterprises so they can develop their activities throughout Latin America, whether acting directly as foreign enterprises or as joint ventures, in this way continuing to take in fabulous profits.

In all probability the prices of raw material of which the United States is the principal buyer will also keep falling. This prediction can be safely made since the supply on the world market of raw materials produced in Latin America (coffee, cotton, tin, etc.) exceeds the demand. Plus the tendency is to develop new areas (for instance, coffee plantations in Africa).

The U.S. monopolies’ profits signify an export of dollars abroad. On top of this, the lowering of the prices of raw materials signifies fewer dollars coming in. Therefore there will be a greater or lesser deterioration in the balance of payments for nearly

all Latin American countries. Moreover, the tendency is for the discrepancy between investments and exports of profits to grow.

From here on in, whenever a country needs help from international finance organizations for its shattered economy, the International Monetary Fund will step in, give its “wise and considered” opinion, and tighten even more its control over the economy of the country. Domestic credits will be curtailed, and the economy will be brought in line with the interests of the monopolies. This will happen sooner or later in every country of Latin America....

The working people of each Latin American country subjected to this system will day by day increase their desire to free themselves from oppression. From afar, they will see the example of Cuba as well as other examples, more distant perhaps, even more compelling—the great examples of the socialist countries and especially the Soviet Union, which took the first step toward the liberation of mankind. Quietly and full of wrath, the working people will go forward until some day, some place, the spark will ignite and a new revolutionary flame will be lit in the Americas. Forging ahead fatefully with the rapid steps of history during this convulsive moment for humanity, that day is approaching for all Latin America.

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Step by step—“A little-noticed provision in a new federal education law is requiring high schools to hand over to military recruiters



Harry Ring

some key information about its juniors and seniors: name, address and phone number.... School systems that fail to comply could lose federal money. The measure also applies to private schools receiving federal funding.”—Ken Maguire, Associated Press.

Labour Party gov’t can’t stop cops?—“Police more likely to stop and search blacks and Asians”—Headline, the *Times*, London.

No comment—“40 new jails needed as courts get tougher.”—Headline, the *Times*. London.

American Dream?—Phil McGraw—“Dr. Phil” to his radio audience—found himself transferred from Dallas to the Los Angeles area. For starters, he rented a Beverly Hills home for \$20,000 a month.

But now he and his spouse can unpack. They have an ample home of their own in Beverly Hills. Walled and gated, it includes the customary amenities—many bed-

rooms, master suite with limestone floors, etc. For \$7.5 million, it includes a circular staircase inside and a circular drive outside.

Mideast ‘civilizers’—“Israeli army probes slaying of Palestinian grandmother”, “Israeli troops kill boy, 11, in West Bank,” “9-year-old Gaza girl is latest Mideast victim”—News headlines, December 29, 30, 2002.

Isn’t stealing cheaper?—“[Israeli Likud party] central committee members demanded thousands of dollars to deliver votes during the primary at the Sheraton City Tower Hotel, near Tel Aviv, which some Israeli news reports say was flooded with ‘escorts’ [prostitutes].... Buy-

ing and selling primary votes has long been considered both in the Likud and its chief opponent, the Labor Party, though political experts say it has never been so open.”—The *New York Times*, December 19, 2002.

Fraud of capitalist education—At the various football bowl games, coaches did nicely. The season’s salaries were at or near the \$1 million mark, with some double that amount.

That’s what makes it addictive?—Hershey, Archer-Daniels-Midland, and other companies have been taken to court by environmentalists on the charge that they expose customers to dangerous lev-

els of lead in their chocolates. This violates a law requiring companies to disclose if their products contain ingredients that can cause cancer.

Fasten your seat belt, shut your eyes—“Pilots who take off and land at the Provo, Utah, airport say it’s busy enough to merit a control tower. Every day, an average of 402 flights take off and land there. On peak days that can be as busy as 60 per hour.”—News item.

Thought for the week—“The problem is that the good Lord didn’t see it to put oil and gas reserves where there are democratic governments.”—Vice President Richard Cheney in 1996.

Florida garment strikers demand workers’ jobs back

BY ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—Workers are well into their fifth month of picket duty as the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) conducts hearings to rule on a charge that the Point Blank Body Armor company violated the rights of workers by unfairly interfering in a union organizing drive. Workers on strike against Point Blank have testified before the administrative law judge about company maneuvers against the union in the weeks that preceded their August 9 walkout, which began after three union supporters were fired.

In September the NLRB filed an unfair labor practices complaint charging that the company firings were part of a range of acts of illegal interference against union supporters, including threats to close the plant and denial of overtime to pro-union workers. It is asking the court to reinstate the three fired unionists. The workers at the clothing plant of some 350, located north of Miami in Oakland Park, are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Point Blank is a subsidiary of DHB Industries, Inc.

The three victimized unionists testified at the hearings, which began December 2. The first to be fired was Isma Sadius, whom workers had chosen to lead a large delegation to present a union petition to the bosses on July 18. Workers described how he led a spirited, orderly group to talk to the factory manager during morning break.

Testifying for the company, Rosa Valdes, executive secretary to DHB chief operating officer Sandra Hatfield, labeled the workers’ delegation as a “riot.” She said she locked her office door and contacted the police. She called 911 again for paramedics and then called the rent-a-cop agency Vanguard Security. Police and security guards arrived wearing bulletproof vests after workers had already returned to their jobs. The bosses then “evacuated” the workers. “I saw the police. We were all startled. They were very aggressive,” production coordinator Maria Duque testified.

“There were policemen at every door and at the front of the room. They told us to leave rapidly. [Union leader] Virginia Salazar protested that they were violating our rights.

But [the boss] said it was for security. One by one we went out. We did not punch out. They told us to leave fast,” one striker told the court.

A few minutes later Isma Sadius was fired and arrested for “breach of the peace.” Weeks later union supporter Carlos Briceño was fired from his job on the cutting floor.

‘They touch one, they touch all’

“At the [August 7] union meeting we discussed the rumor that Point Blank would lay off 50 employees. We decided that we would not permit them to fire one more worker; we would go on strike. We said that if they touch one, they touch all,” said Migdalia Ameneiro when she took the stand. “On the morning of August 9, when we realized that they had fired Midho Cadet, we went on strike. We are on strike for better conditions, better treatment, to demand respect and more consideration.”

Company lawyers have attempted to solicit information from workers about the August 7 union meeting, such as the names of those present.

“Who called the strike?” company lawyer Joan Canny asked Ameneiro. “How many people were at the meeting?” The company tried to subpoena 150 striking workers to testify. The summonses were revoked by the judge.

One worker described in detail how managers had tried to enlist her against the union by flattery, badgering, and closed-door meetings.

Ameneiro described how her supervisor quizzed her on her attitude toward the union. When she informed her that she had indeed signed a union card, the supervisor told her she was crazy and that “if the union came in the company would close. [She asked me,] ‘Did I know what the union was all about?’ I said I didn’t know, but that in my country I had worked with the union and it was good.” Despite the fact that the company has hired scabs and claims to be operating at full production, strikers have stood firm. They have reached out for support, appealing for food and for cash donations for their strike fund. A holiday picket line and celebration took place December 21.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Strikers at Point Blank Body Armor in Oakland Park, Florida, rally December 21.

A delegation of strikers also participated in a recent Miami march to demand freedom for 200 Haitian immigrants imprisoned at Krome Detention Center.

Meanwhile, DHB Industries is suffering a slump in its stock prices, from \$8.30 last February, to its current level of about \$1.35. This despite an increase in gross revenues,

which are up 26 percent compared to a year ago. Thanks to intensified U.S. war preparations, expanding police departments, and the largest prison population in the world, the market for armored clothing has been growing in the United States. Point Blank manufactures bulletproof vests and police riot gear.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



January 20, 1978

In scenes reminiscent of their role in previous colonial struggles, French jet fighters are swooping over the deserts of northern Africa in bombing raids against guerrillas fighting for their country’s independence.

On at least two occasions in December, French planes rained napalm and phosphorous bombs on guerrilla units of the Polisario Front, a group that is fighting for the independence of Western Sahara. According to Polisario sources, scores of persons have been killed in the French attacks.

Although the French government now admits that its planes participated in two clashes with Polisario, it denies that it used napalm or phosphorous bombs.

However, Polisario was able to present several Mauritanian prisoners who survived the December 14–15 attack to French reporters. “The planes dived toward us very quickly, dropped their missiles, and reascended,” one of them explained. “What kind of missiles? Sometimes a plane released a liquid, oil I think. Another followed and fired at the liquid, which burst into flames immediately. Other planes dropped bombs. They exploded on the ground and burned. I think they were napalm.”

Two of the Mauritanian survivors carried visible evidence of the kind of bombs used by the French: Their arms and backs were burned.

Besides the French bombing raids against the Saharans, there were two similar cases of direct French military intervention in Africa in 1977. In April, [French president Valéry] Giscard provided pilots and planes to airlift 1,500 Moroccan troops to Zaire, to help the Mobutu Sese Seko regime put down

a rebellion in the province of Shaba. And in July Paris announced that it had provided “logistical support” to the regime in Chad in its war against Toubou rebels in the northern part of that country.



January 19, 1953

NEWARK—No court action has been taken so far by either side in the Newark fight over the federal housing “loyalty” oath. Newark is the first city whose officials have actually begun to enforce the new witchhunt measure instituted by a congressional amendment adopted last July.

Originally, the Newark Housing Authority gave tenants at the local federal projects a three-day deadline ending Dec. 26, by which they were supposed to sign a statement certifying that no one in their families belonged to any of the 203 organizations arbitrarily included on the so-called “subversive” list issued by the Attorney General.

Apparently the results were not as favorable as the NHA officials expected. On Jan. 7 they reported that 328 out of the 3,008 families had failed to comply.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which will represent some of the non-complying tenants in a challenge to the oath is apparently waiting for the housing officials to make the first court move.

Among those represented by the ACLU will be James Kutcher, legless veteran and one of the first victims of the federal “loyalty” purge in 1948. Kutcher’s father wants to sign the housing oath but cannot do so because his son is a member of the Socialist Workers Party, one of the groups on the Attorney General’s list.

JACK BARNES
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Stop INS registrations, arrests!

The U.S. government’s “registration” of immigrants from a list of targeted countries—mostly from the Mideast and South Asia—is not only part of the U.S. rulers’ war preparations in the Gulf region. Above all, it is part of their offensive against fundamental rights at home—not simply against the rights of those most immediately in the government’s crosshairs, but of all workers and farmers.

U.S. residents who are males over the age of 16 and who hail from 20 countries—including Lebanon, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, and north Korea—have been given deadlines to be photographed, fingerprinted, and interrogated by immigration cops. U.S. officials say, however, that they intend to widen the registration requirement to “track” all 35 million people living here with temporary resident status from all countries. But why would they stop there? Setting up this kind of national tracking system coincides with moves to establish a national identity card for all U.S. residents. Probes toward such an ID card have begun with requirements by some states that driver’s licenses include a person’s Social Security number.

Such moves go hand in hand with other attempts to curb the rights of working people—from indefinitely jailing U.S. citizens without charges by labeling them “enemy combatants,” to deporting U.S. permanent residents for having a minor conviction on their record from decades ago.

These attacks are part of the broader war by the capitalist rulers against working people at home. As their profit rates fall and their economy sinks into depression, the ruling billionaire families try to take it out on our backs—demanding pay cuts, longer work hours, and speedup, as

well as attacks on social entitlements. On a political level the bosses’ government seeks to hamper workers’ ability to organize to resist—and they know working-class resistance will grow in response to the economic catastrophe.

Many of those denouncing the registration and recent mass arrests in Los Angeles correctly draw a parallel to the more than 100,000 Japanese-Americans, mostly U.S. citizens, who were hauled off to concentration camps after Washington declared war on Japan in 1941. That brutality went hand-in-hand with the Roosevelt administration’s drive for “no-strike” pledges in the unions, efforts to hamstring the emerging Black rights movement, and the jailing of union militants and socialists who opposed the imperialist war.

The U.S. concentration camps for Japanese-Americans were the policy not of a fascist regime but of a “democratic” imperialist government. Likewise, the probes against workers’ rights today are not those of a rightist government, much less a police state, but rather a bipartisan offensive that has been unfolding for years and that will escalate as the capitalist order declines.

The protests that have already taken place against the INS’s actions, from Los Angeles to New York, are an indication that working people will not be willing to subordinate their interests to the employers’ calls for sacrifice of rights and living standards for the “war effort.” By joining the ongoing protests against the INS roundups and deportations, both defenders of the rights of immigrants and other working-class militants will strengthen the cause of all working people.

Oppose threats against north Korea

To justify their policy of aggression, U.S. officials claim the government of north Korea poses a nuclear threat. This turns reality on its head. It’s true there is a danger of “weapons of mass destruction” on the Korean peninsula—but that threat comes from the imperialist government in Washington, not from north Korea. Millions of people in both south and north sense that reality.

Through its murderous war in 1950–53, Washington partitioned the country. For years it propped up dictatorships in south Korea. Five decades later, the U.S. rulers enforce the division of that nation despite the Korean people’s deep aspirations for reunification. Some 37,000 U.S. troops occupy Korean soil in the southern half of the peninsula. Their nuclear and “conventional” weapons are aimed at working people on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone.

Today the U.S. rulers are preparing a war of plunder in the Mideast by targeting Iraq—another country branded as part of an “axis of evil” by the Bush administration. The imperialist powers’ moves there reinforce their threats against other peoples and countries around the world. While the immediate target of war today is Iraq, the

stepped-up U.S. actions and threats against north Korea are real. They include the seizure of a merchant ship in the Indian Ocean in early December, the withholding of oil to strangle the economy, the criminal use of food as a weapon, and efforts at diplomatic isolation.

In south Korea the acquittal of two U.S. soldiers who ran over and killed two girls has sparked a renewed wave of outrage at Washington’s trampling on national sovereignty.

In the years following World War II the Korean people dealt big blows to imperialist domination. Capitalist rule was overthrown in the north. In the Korean War, Washington was dealt its first major military defeat. The resistance of the Korean people to U.S. imperialism and their irrepressible fight for reunification have strengthened the struggles of working people and the oppressed worldwide.

Working people in the United States have a particular obligation to join with the Korean people in demanding an end to U.S. threats and economic sanctions against north Korea, normalization of diplomatic and trade relations between Washington and Pyongyang, and the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from the Korean peninsula.

Midwest tour of Róger Calero

Continued from Page 8

nesota, and 20 are jailed in Louisiana. He said they were about to be deported back to Somalia when a judge in Seattle ruled that their deportation was illegal.

Jamal announced his organization was starting a “National Tour Against Hate.” He plans to go to Seattle, one of the cities where the Somali community has been under attack by the U.S. government. He will also go to Maine, where the mayor in the town of Lewiston wrote an open letter demanding that Somalis discourage friends and relatives from moving there. A rightist outfit, the World Church of the Creator, is calling a “national” march of its white supremacist supporters in Lewiston demanding the expulsion of Somalis from that city.

Calero explained, “I am on tour to join together with others who are itching for a fight” against attacks on basic rights such as the cases cited by all the other speakers on the platform. He said he was able to be present that evening thanks to the immediate response from people across the country and internationally who had sent messages to the INS in Houston demanding he be released from the immigration jail there. His case has received broad support because “my case is just like so many others,” he noted.

Calero pointed to the INS registration of “special aliens”—immigrants from certain countries targeted by Washington—that led to hundreds of people being arrested in Los Angeles and other cities. In face of an angry protest by thousands of people against the arrests of those who had gone to the INS offices to comply with the law, U.S. authorities released some of those detained.

“We need to sound the alarm to protest these attacks,” Calero said. He noted that immigrants are not the only ones whose rights are under attack today. He pointed out that the U.S. government has already “indefinitely” imprisoned two U.S. citizens without charges—denying their constitutional right to due process—by labeling them “unlawful combatants.”

Calero pointed out that under the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, the

number of deportable offenses was significantly expanded. “A good number of people have been deported for minor offenses committed many years earlier—cases similar to mine. Many working people in this country have a friend, a family member, or a co-worker who has been arrested and who faces deportation by the INS.”

In this context, he said, “the campaign against my deportation can reinforce other fights. We are seeking to mobilize the broadest possible forces to stop this deportation. Many organizations and individuals will understand that they have a stake in the outcome of this fight and other fights against deportations: unions, organizations of journalists and writers, Black and Latino rights organizations, civil liberties groups, student organizations, anti-war groups, and many more.”

A representative of the Twin Cities Committee to Stop the Deportation of Róger Calero urged all those present to inform others about the defense campaign, to seek more messages to the INS in support of Calero, and to raise funds to help cover the legal and other costs of the defense effort. At the meeting itself, a fund collection brought in almost \$600.

In addition to those speaking, the meeting received many endorsements. These included Mark Nowak, chair of the Political Action Committee of the National Writers Union; August Nimtz of the Minnesota Cuba Committee; Pablo Tapia, a community leader and immigrant rights activist; David Riehle, chairperson of United Transportation Union Local 650; Gladys McKenzie, business agent of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees District 6; and Gary Pofertl, national business agent of the American Postal Workers Union.

During his tour in this city, Calero met with officials of UFCW Local 789 and visited with some of his former co-workers at Dakota Premium Foods. He was interviewed by two radio stations.

Local 789 is sponsoring a fund-raiser for Calero’s defense campaign, to be held January 11 at the union hall, at 266 Hardman in South St. Paul.

New Zealand: Communist League hosts conference

Continued from Page 11

Australian colonial rule formally ended in 1975, he said, “what kind of independence did we get?” He pointed out that PNG is very rich in resources and yet the people are very poor. “We are still controlled by Canberra and its imperialist friends in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank,” Embil said, describing how protests in 2001 by thousands of students had been violently suppressed, with four students shot dead.

The final speaker on the panel was Diana Newberry, a member of the SWP National Committee and of the Young Socialists in the United States. Resistance by working people in response to the brutal conditions generated by capitalism—from dock workers to coal miners to working farmers—is at the heart of the growing opportunities to build the communist movement worldwide, she said. Pointing to the importance of the lessons and revolutionary continuity contained in the books published by Pathfinder, she said these are “real tools for revolutionists and fighters everywhere.”

Socialist summer school

Rebecca Broad from the Young Socialists in Christchurch, who co-chaired the panel, reported that nine YS-age participants attended a meeting earlier that day which discussed the campaigns of the communist movement that young socialists could be active in. For example, she and another youth will be taking part in socialist summer school classes, while getting a summer job in industry and participating in political activities together with socialist workers.

A number of classes were held over the two mornings of the conference. Topics included, “The Jewish Question: why anti-Semitism arises out of the decay of capitalism”; “The reactionary history of New Zealand imperialism”; “Karl Marx’s *Value, Price and Profit*: the struggle between capital and labour”; and “Chomsky and the anarchist perceptive: an obstacle for the workers’ movement.”

Attractive large displays prepared by supporters of the Communist League illustrated the work they carry out as part of an international effort to help produce the books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder and their efforts to promote these titles to bookstores and libraries.

A Pathfinder literature table was a focal point of many informal discussions over the two days. Altogether NZ\$250 worth of books were sold, including a number of copies of Lenin’s *Imperialism*, several titles in French, and many titles at sale prices picked up by first-time participants (NZ\$1.00=US\$0.50).

To help finance the work of the communist movement, a six-week fund appeal was launched at the Militant Labor Forum, where more than NZ\$2000 was raised.

Palestinian speaks out from INS jail

Continued from Page 9

lar situation. Recently, fellow prisoners there have issued statements in both Arabic and in Urdu denouncing the conditions they face.

Picket lines demanding Abdel-Muhti’s release have been held every Friday at noon at the New York City Federal Building at 26 Federal Plaza in Manhattan (Broadway at Worth St.). Those who want to support the defense campaign can contact the Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti, P.O. Box 20587, Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009; tel: (212) 674-9499; e-mail: freefarouk@yahoo.com. The committee is asking defenders of Abdel-Muhti to contact the INS district director in New Jersey, Andrea Quarantillo, to demand his release: tel: (973) 645-4421, fax: (973) 297-4848.

Letters can be sent to him at: Farouk Abdel-Muhti, #91544, 4G4, Passaic County Jail, 11 Marshall St., Paterson, NJ 07501.

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Dairy farmers in Maine dump milk to protest low prices

BY TED LEONARD

FARMINGTON, Maine—“They work their whole lives, they go to retire, and they are still in debt,” said Konrad Bailey, describing the price and debt squeeze facing his fellow dairy farmers.

On November 9 Bailey led a milk dump protest near this town in central Maine. Two dozen farmers and an equal number of supporters gathered at the farm of Egide and Carrie Dostie while 10,000 pounds of milk were poured into a manure pit. The farmers were protesting the low price they are getting for their product.

Bailey said he received \$12.10 for a hundredweight (100 pounds) of milk. On average a dairy farmer needs to receive about \$17 a hundredweight to cover costs. But for a dairy farmer like Bailey, who milks about 50 cows, it takes between \$23 and \$24 a hundredweight to break even.

Bailey, 40, an eighth-generation farmer, has a 450-acre farm. His ancestors were given the land on Bailey Hill as payment for fighting in the American Revolutionary War.

Maine’s top agricultural products are potatoes and dairy products, followed by eggs, fish, and shellfish farming. Maine ranks second in New England for milk and livestock production.

Following the protest Bailey made a decision to sell half his herd. “For me producing bulk milk is a loss,” he said. Half the milk he now produces is processed on the farm into butter and milk and sold to neighbors and others through his small home-delivery dairy. The other half is sold as bulk milk.

Bailey grows hay and corn, and also sells wood from his land to make ends meet.

Earlier in 2002 Bailey sold six acres of land to buy a used tractor rather than add to the \$120,000 in debt he carries.

Other farmers in the area are doing the same. Donald and Jill Gage, who have been on a farm in New Sharon, Maine, that has been in their family since the 1950s, sold two tractors the week before the milk dump because they could not afford to keep them.

Bailey explained that in his town there were about 40 farmers in the 1970s, while today there are only 10. Statewide there are fewer than 500 dairy farmers, down from 5,100 in 1945. Farmers today produce more than three times as much milk, with one tenth the number of farms.

Neighboring Massachusetts and Vermont are no different. A decade ago there were about 400 dairy farmers in Massachusetts;

today there are 249. Thirty years ago there were more than 4,000 dairy farmers in Vermont, while today there are less than 1,400.

The Dosties, who still owe \$1 million on the farm they bought five years ago, told reporters at the protest they cannot just add more cows to the 270 they milk. “That should not be the solution. You can only support so many cows with a certain land base,” said Egide Dostie.

Bailey, who also participated in protests in 1998 against retailers of milk, said he made a leaflet for the November 9 action and passed it out to neighbors and customers. Milk truck drivers took some leaflets when they picked up bulk milk at his farm and implement dealers passed them out too.

At the milk dump Bailey asked rhetorically, “Do you want to get paid for your profession or go out slowly one by one? Do we want to stand up and tell the world we are going broke and processors are getting filthy rich off of us?”

Milk processing monopolies

A few companies control milk processing in the United States. The main one is Dallas-based Dean Foods, which processes 30 percent of the country’s milk. National Dairy Holdings, also based in Dallas, is the second-largest milk processor, accounting for 7 percent. National Dairy Holdings was founded in 2001 with spinoffs ordered by regulators from the merger that year of the



Dairy farmers in Maine pour milk into manure pit in protest demanding higher prices for their product. Prices paid to farmers have fallen to the lowest levels in 25 years.

milk processing giants, Suiza Foods and Dean Foods.

In New England Dean controls 75 percent of the milk processed and H.P. Hood controls 15 percent. At the end of last year Hood and National Dairy Holdings announced they were merging.

On New England supermarket shelves, the price of milk has remained at \$2.99 a gallon while the price farmers receive for their milk has fallen by 50 cents over the last year to \$1.15 a gallon.

Subsidies from the 2002 Farm Bill, which replaced the expired Northeast Dairy Compact, a regional subsidy program, provides small dairy owners with 45 percent of the difference between their costs and the price

they get for their bulk milk.

Dexter Randall, a Vermont dairy farmer, said in a phone interview that he receives a little less money from the current program than he did under the Compact. The new farm bill, he explained, “lines the pockets of agribusiness and gives a little money to the farmers.”

Randall pointed out that detractors of the Northeast Compact argued that “it raised the price the consumer paid for milk, but since the Compact has expired the price of milk in the stores has not come down.”

Ted Leonard works in a meatpacking plant in the Boston area. Maggie Trowe, a garment worker, contributed to this article.

Calero meets workers and farmers in Iowa

Continued from Page 8

in, some attacking and some supporting Calero’s right to remain in this country.

Calero also went to Perry, Iowa, where he visited with Jim Oleson, president of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1149. Calero had been a member of this local when he worked at the IBP plant in Perry a couple of years ago. Oleson warmly welcomed him and gave examples of how workers there were being harassed by both the company and the government. He said the union defends workers regardless of their immigration status.

That evening, Calero met at the Perry public library with seven workers from the IBP plant. The meeting had been publicized by supporters leafleting workers at the plant and through two articles on the case published in the local Spanish-language weekly *El Enfoque*.

Calero spoke in English and Spanish, highlighting the importance of his case for working people, whether born in the United

States or abroad.

One worker asked if the INS had arrested Calero because of his trip to Cuba and the fact that he writes for *Perspectiva Mundial*, a socialist magazine. Calero replied that he was flagged by the INS like many other immigrants returning from trips abroad, and that it was not until later that the INS found out who he was.

The fact that the INS is seeking to exclude Calero—a permanent resident—on the basis of a 1988 conviction of selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop while he was in high school, is similar to what thousands of others are facing in this country today, he pointed out. While locked up he began interviewing other prisoners in the INS jail—many of whom had stories similar to his—and filing the articles with *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant*.

Another worker at the meeting asked how supporting the case would help other immigrants, and whether signing the petition opposing his deportation would put them in

any danger. Calero explained that by fighting back workers have a chance of winning and that a victory in his case would strengthen the fight to defend the rights of all. All those present at the meeting signed the petition, and agreed to help publicize the case and give money to the defense effort.

On New Year’s eve, Calero went to a Kwanzaa celebration in Des Moines. There he met with activists in the Black community who indicated they wanted to spread the word about the defense campaign through their e-mail lists and to send letters of protest to the INS.

At a New Year’s party in Des Moines, supporters of Calero from Omaha, Nebraska, reported that they were winning broader support for the case there and were building a public meeting in that city scheduled for January 8.

Edwin Fruit is a member of UFCW Local 1149.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Oppose the U.S. War Drive in the Middle East. Speaker: Patrick O’Neill, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 10. Program, 7:30 p.m.; dinner, 6:30 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd floor. Donation: program \$5, dinner \$5. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

NEW YORK

Garment District

The Growing Movement in Korea for Reunification. Behind the U.S. Policy of Aggression Against North Korea. Speaker: Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 10. Program, 7:30 p.m.; dinner, 6:30 p.m. 545 8th Ave., 14th floor. Donation: program \$5, dinner \$5. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Urgent Call to Action: January 13 Protest Navy Bombing Practice in Vieques! All out January 13 at 4:30 p.m., Times Square to protest the U.S. Navy’s announced resumption of bombing practices in Vieques, Puerto Rico. For more information contact the *Vieques Support Campaign* at (212) 677-0619 or (212) 601-4751 or by e-mail at mail@viequessupport.org.

—LETTERS—

Protest in Koreatown

Chanting “Justice Now!” in Korean, several dozen demonstrators gathered in Los Angeles’ Koreatown on New Year’s Eve to “Protest U.S. Army Killing of Two Korean Schoolgirls!” The action was held in solidarity with actions in several other cities and a demonstration of 100,000 in Seoul (South Korea’s capital) a week earlier. The protest focused on the “insincere and indirect apology by President Bush” and the late November acquittal of the two GIs who had run over two teenage Korean schoolgirls, fatally crushing them with their armored vehicle. The incident occurred on June 13 as the U.S. military was participating in massive military exercises on civilian roads. Rally publicity materials demanded “immediate withdrawal of the 37,000 U.S. troops occupying the Korean Peninsula.” Almost all speakers urged participation in protests against the U.S. war drive against Iraq scheduled to take place in Los Angeles on January 11 and in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., on January 18.

Barry Schier
Los Angeles, California

Useful article by Trotsky

Could you please print the name of the very useful article by Leon Trotsky that you

ran in the December 30 Book of the Month columns? Anyone wanting to read the entire article would have quite a difficult time locating it in the book, which is a collection of scores of Trotsky’s letters, articles, and interviews from 1936-37.

Jim Altenberg
Oakland, California

[Editor’s note: The article, titled “On the Threshold of a New World War,” appears on pages 438-457 of Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1936–37.]

On ‘patriotic dissent’

Thank you for the response by Maurice Williams to the letter by Chuck Cairns in the December 16, 2002, *Militant*. It reintroduces history to politics as a way of avoiding costly errors.

A concrete illustration of the point Williams makes comes in the form of a column by Nat Hentoff in the Nov. 29, 2002, *Village Voice*. In his column, headlined, “The New American Freedom Fighters: Organizing Against General Ashcroft,” Hentoff lauds the development of the Northampton [Massachusetts] Bill of Rights Committee. The committee’s ACLU-inspired popular initiative to affirm the Bill of Rights, backed up by “law enforcement,” including the po-

lice and the courts, has been picked up by at least 15 other town councils, and other such “affirmations” are pending in 40 municipalities in 24 states.

A photo accompanies the article. In it, a banner is displayed with the slogan “Dissent is Patriotic.” Patriotic to what manner of class rule? That is a question Hentoff’s article deliberately sidesteps. Spokesmen for class collaboration such as Hentoff promote a dangerous lie. They suggest that the broadside attack on civil liberties (and what’s left out: workers’ rights) intended by the USA Patriot Act can be fought using the cops, courts, and agencies pledged to defend capitalist rule, wrapped in the bloodsoaked flag of U.S. imperialism. They would have us re-learn the lessons that should have been more than adequately drawn from events leading up to the formation of the Weimar Republic.

Toba Singer
San Francisco, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Cop brutality sparks revolt in E. Timor

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY—An incident of police brutality against students and teachers at a high school in Dili, the capital of East Timor, sparked a social explosion in that city December 3–4. The government relied on hundreds of Portuguese, Japanese, Australian, and other foreign troops, stationed in East Timor under the United Nations banner since that nation gained independence from Indonesia in 1999, to try to suppress the rebellion. The eruption of protests drew attention to the critical social conditions facing workers and farmers there.

Protests began December 3 immediately after cops from the hated Special Police Unit went into a school and seized a student whom they accused of being involved in a stabbing incident. The cops cuffed him by one hand then, over the protests of his teacher and other students, threw the chain over a bar and hoisted him painfully off the ground. The teacher and several students were also beaten. Angry students hit the streets in protest.

“The police were uncontrolled,” said Jose Agustino, the deputy director of the Student Solidarity Council. “We reject that kind of attitude.”

The following morning about 500 high school and university students as well as others gathered outside the national parliament in Dili, and then marched on the police headquarters two blocks away, to demand the arrested youth’s release. East Timorese police fired on the crowd, which had swelled to 1,000, hitting 18 people. Honorio Ximenes, 14, was killed instantly. Manuel da Silva, 18, died in hospital the following day.

Numerous buildings, including the national parliament, were reported attacked in the ensuing upsurge of protests. A number of Australian-owned businesses such as the ANZ Bank, the Hello Mister supermarket, and Chubb security were gutted. New Zealand-owned businesses were also attacked.

Three houses owned by the family of East Timor’s Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri, were burned, including the Prime Minister’s residence, as well as a house leased to an ANZ Bank manager. A Dili mosque was also attacked that day, with eight houses in its compound burned.

Hundreds of foreign troops and police stationed in East Timor under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in Support of East Timor were deployed to quell the rebellion. Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta thanked the Portuguese government



Australian troops in Dili, East Timor, harass East Timorese during alleged search for weapons in October 1999. Brutality by hated cop force sparked revolt in Dili in December 2002. Government relied on imperialist-led occupation forces to try to suppress the rebellion.

in particular for its rapid response, which he lauded for “saving the situation” December 4. An overnight curfew was imposed, and high schools and the university campus shut for two days, as the imperialist-led troops threw up roadblocks and guarded key buildings. Around 80 people were reported arrested, mainly on charges of “looting,” with 10 held beyond the legal 72-hour period for awaiting court appearances. A small student protest was reportedly dispersed on December 5.

Imperialist occupation force

An Australian-led military intervention began in East Timor under the UN flag in 1999. Today a foreign force of 4,500 troops, 750 police and 460 advisors and staff remains deployed there. The imperialist government of Australia provides the largest contingent, with 1,100 soldiers along with 55 federal and state cops.

The UN administration imposed by the 1999 intervention handed government authority over to the Alkatiri administration at independence celebrations on May 20. Fretilin (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor), led by Alkatiri, had won 57 percent of the vote in August 2001 elections to a Constituent Assembly. In presidential elections held last April, Xanana

Gusmao, a central leader of East Timor’s national liberation struggle since the early 1980s, won over 80 percent of the vote.

The December 3–5 struggles are the sharpest expressions of social tension to date as the East Timorese people confront the tasks of building a new nation saddled with imperialist domination and a legacy of co-



lonial pillage.

East Timor, a semicolonial nation of 800,000 inhabitants located east of Indonesia, is one of the most impoverished countries in the world. The big majority of the population lives in the countryside as subsistence farmers. Paid employment is extremely scarce, with estimates of unemployment ranging from 65 percent to 90 percent.

Portugal was the colonial power in East Timor for several centuries, until a new, popular, government led by Fretilin declared independence in 1975. At the end of that year, with the backing of the U.S. and Australian governments, Indonesia’s Suharto dictatorship invaded East Timor and imposed an occupation regime, but was unable to break Timorese resistance to its brutal rule.

After Suharto was forced to resign in 1998 in face of massive protests by Indonesian students, workers and peasants against the U.S.-backed regime, an upsurge in the Timorese independence struggle forced the Indonesian government to concede a referendum in that colony. In the referendum, held in August 1999 under UN sponsorship, almost 80 percent of the Timorese voted to reject autonomy within Indonesia, instead favoring independence.

The Australian and other imperialist powers feared that the deepening East Timorese mobilizations for self-determination in 1998 would further destabilize Indonesia. They decided to reverse their policy of backing Indonesian rule over the territory in favor of attempting to place their own stamp on East Timor’s development, while maintaining good relations with the Indonesian rulers.

Under pressure from Washington, the In-

donesian government agreed to hand over East Timor to a UN administration following the 1999 referendum. This imperialist intervention was supported almost universally by the different political forces in the independence movement. Portuguese imperialism, one of the occupying forces, had long posed as a defender of the East Timorese struggle against Indonesian rule with the aim of reestablishing its influence there.

Throughout 1999 the Indonesian military carried out a brutal assault on the independence struggle in East Timor in the hope of blocking a pro-independence vote, while the independence movement increasingly demobilized in favor of UN intervention, including acceptance of the imperialist demand for “cantonment” of its guerrilla fighters.

The repression by the Indonesian military culminated in a “scorched earth” rampage following the August 1999 referendum. According to UN estimates, more than 1,000 people were killed, 70 percent of the country’s infrastructure was destroyed, and around 250,000 of the population of 800,000 were corralled into refugee camps in Indonesian West Timor.

An Australian-led intervention force landed in East Timor in September 1999 as the Indonesian military withdrew, and imposed the UN occupation. Among the measures adopted during this occupation, with the support of the East Timorese leaders incorporated into its leading councils, were the adoption of the U.S. dollar as the national currency and the adoption of Portu-

guese, spoken by only 5 percent of the population, as the national language along with Tetum, East Timor’s *lingua franca*. Indonesian and English are recognized as “working languages.” Hundreds of millions of dollars pledged in “aid” to the new country is being held in trust funds by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Cops from colonial regime

One of the sharpest controversies in East Timor has been the incorporation into the new police force of a number of cops from the time of the Indonesian occupation regime, including current police chief Paulo Martins. While former pro-independence guerrilla fighters were also selected for the new police and armed forces established by the UN administration, many demobilized resistance fighters remain unemployed and face abysmal living conditions.

Organizations of these veterans have staged several large protests in recent months, including a November 28 action of 3,000 in Dili—a city of 100,000—and a November 26 demonstration in Baucau, east of Dili, where cops killed one protester.

“We have had reports of [police] violence against the prisoners” arrested in Dili, Jose Luis Oliveira, of the East Timor-based Association for Law, Human Rights, and Justice, told the *Melbourne Age*. He explained that the police had refused to allow a representative of the association to visit the prisoners.

“Our police are ignorant on human rights and are repeating what the Indonesians did,” Oliveira said, adding that the association sees the United Nations as having final responsibility. “It was they who trained them.”

Steelworkers outlast AK Steel in Ohio as bosses end three-year lockout

BY MIKE FITZSIMMONS

MANSFIELD, Ohio—Members and supporters of United Steelworkers of America Local 169 are celebrating their success in outlasting the bosses at AK Steel Corp., who on December 10 announced the end of their 39-month lockout and the recall of workers at the company’s Mansfield Works. A few days after the announcement, the unionists gathered to congratulate each other for their resistance as they exchanged gifts, donations, and messages of solidarity.

Tim Risinger, one of the 29 union members fired during the lockout, said, “This shows we were right. AK wanted to get rid of the union, and it failed.”

Mike Ernsberger, coordinator of the union’s food bank, pointed to the donations that made possible the distribution of 700 tons of food to families of locked-out steelworkers in the course of the fight. Michele Laghetto, who chaired the meeting, introduced the several members of the organization Women of Steel from the town of Mansfield and throughout the region who had actively organized solidarity in their respective union locals and districts.

According to the *Middletown Journal* in Middletown, Ohio, site of company headquarters, the employer agreed to end the lockout when the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) officials informed the company that they had agreed to “certain items that were in dispute.” Details of a new contract between the union and the company are still being negotiated.

No USWA member crossed the picket lines during the three-year lockout, and the plant has been run by scabs recruited by a union-busting company hired by AK Steel prior to the lockout. The replacement workers will be terminated as union members are called back and trained in what is now “a different plant,” according to AK spokesman Alan McCoy, “one owned by a company with its own safety mindset and unique productivity and quality regimens.”

Ray Delarwelle, one of the fired unionists, said, “I expect all of us terminated union members to eventually return to work. We have mixed feelings about the possible agreement. While on the one hand we can’t trust the company, on the other hand we’re definitely stronger going back together.”